















REMAINS

OF

ALEXANDER KNOX, ESQ.

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ALEXANDER KNOL, ESQ.

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## OF

### THE THIRD VOLUME.

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## EDITOR'S PREFACE

TO

### THE THIRD AND FOURTH VOLUMES.

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No excuse, I am persuaded, need be assigned for publishing two additional volumes of the Remains of Alexander Knox. The interest which the former papers have excited, the demand for Mr. Knox's writings, and the effect which they are producing,—all these are motives which induce me to bring forward more of the thoughts of one who was long busily employed in preparing the future materials for a more enlarged investigation of religious truth.

On the character of the writings which now appear, I must, however, say a few words. The contents of these volumes were left by Mr. Knox in a wholly unfinished state; and, though consigned to the unrestricted discretion of his heir, not one of them was expressly pointed out, as not one had been definitively arranged, for publication. Those in the first of the two volumes are, however, on subjects on which Mr. Knox always designed that his views, when matured, should be known: and the character of the papers in which those views are exposed, is such, as by no means to unfit them for being even thus made public. From the severity of minute criticism I bespeak shelter for them; but to the candour of enlarged minds I commit them fearlessly, on the ground of their merits.

A chief fault, of which I am conscious, rests with me. It is that of repetition,—in some instances, I may say, of tautology. Had the Author made his own selection, he, no doubt, would have avoided this fault. He would have been careful to speak once only, in the same tone, on one

subject; and, in doing so, what he lost in copiousness he would have gained in strength. He would have placed each object on its proper elevation, prominently in one, and the best, point of view.

But an Editor has no such power; and, by consequence, he is reduced to distressing alternatives of choice. Either he must sacrifice matter which he knows to be important; or he must give a portion of it mutilated, and separate from its connexion; or he must fill up a vacancy, dishonestly and insufficiently, in his own weaker and less expressive words. I have no escape from this difficulty, but by publishing whatever has been written, at the risk of occasionally wearying the reader by the recurrence of the same, or very similar sentiments and expressions, in support of similar arguments and views. But this I am willing to risk: the class of readers whom principally these writings will attract, have better objects in view than the excitements of fancy, and the gratifications of taste. Truth is their aim—truth of the highest order, and for the most important of ends: they seek after the more perfect understanding of that revelation which the word of God contains; but which, for purposes as benevolent as wise, the Spirit of God sees fit to shroud for a time; and which, when he lifts the veil, he unfolds in gradually increasing clearness. It is thus that we must be content to penetrate into the recesses of truths which are infinite in their nature, their relations, and their extent. Nor, in this, are we laboriously toiling to no purpose, nor in a way unmarked by footsteps: gradual ascent and frequent reiteration are the very characteristics even of the Divine prophetic teaching. The Spirit of God inculcates his lessons “precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line.” I fear not the blame of repetition from those who have placed the one great object of religious truth before them, and who think nothing tedious that tends to bring them more perfectly to the knowledge of that wisdom which alone makes truly wise.

To such I commit boldly even the recurring thoughts of one who unweariedly, and always with increasing satis-

faction, sought, again and again, in the Holy Scriptures, for the "one pearl of great price." His mind possessed humility proportioned to its elevation: he was not less patient than quick-sighted. If he saw, intuitively, "the land that is afar off," and caught at a first truth conjecturally, he travelled (as he says of himself) "at a snail's pace," to his conclusions, nor ever rested till his hand held firmly what his keen eye had from a distance descried: and his perseverance was rewarded through every stage; how deep soever he sounded, he never failed to find that there was something still unfathomed below; however high he soared, he obtained clearer views into the infinite extent which interposed between him and the summit of inaccessible brightness.

I have wished, in these volumes, to bring the mind of Mr. Knox before the world in the biography of his intellectual character: therefore I have not scrupled to unfold it as engaged in some of those speculations which he himself deemed rather questionable matter of inquiry, than subjects on which he could yet pronounce. There are papers which he certainly would not, in their present state, have published as his conclusions; for he had, in himself, the means of verifying them; and, till he had verified them to his satisfaction, he would not have delivered his opinions as truths. But here, again, an Editor has no choice: a speculation must be published; or the truths which it involves must be lost for ever; and this would be an injury. Though they be then but as hints, they may yet be indications of solid realities, whose existence (like the new hemisphere, at first conjecturally anticipated) waits but the future efforts of more perfect discovery, to be established as the continent of another world; of one, whose theory was based on the proof of what was known before; one, of whose existence reason was convinced, because, without it, that which was evident was incomplete; because it balanced the preponderant side, and "made the round world sure," by filling up every mutilated proportion. It is the faculty of superior minds to seize, by anticipation, such realities as these; and thus they point the way for



actual possession, to those who, following in the track which *they* have laid down, at length cross safely that intermediate ocean of truth, which at once disunites and joins the new and the old Continent.

I regard much of the thoughts of Mr. Knox as eminently valuable in this light: and, influenced by these considerations, I am not very scrupulous of giving what, in every instance, is unfinished, and, in some, may be vaguely conjectural, to those who are qualified to think and to discriminate, to adopt or reject, to elaborate and to improve.

I have said enough (perhaps too much) on the character of that which is strictly theological in these volumes. But there is much of another character; and, on that, there is something which I must say. The last volume contains matter which is designed, in some measure, to supply the want of a biographical memoir of Mr. Knox. To complete such a memoir was beyond my means of information; and, to make it interesting, in its scantiness, I felt to be out of the power of my abilities. But a desire had been expressed to know what could be told of Mr. Knox personally: and it was a desire which his friends were disposed to gratify, so far as they possessed the means. To indulge a natural, and perhaps a laudable, curiosity, it was resolved to publish such of Mr. Knox's letters as seemed best fitted at once to sketch his biography, and to delineate the features of his heart and mind. This would have been done with reserve, and in the exercise of a somewhat rigid discretion. His life had very little of any interest that was, strictly speaking, public; and his character contained much that, constitutionally, was matter of delicacy, and that opened a field for easy or ill-natured mistake. His opinions, too, (which, habitually, were thrown out with great freedom, and which, in conversation, or familiar correspondence, he was not accustomed to guard sufficiently with qualifying expressions,) were not only liable to misinterpretation, but had, even honestly, been misconstrued; and the authority of his sentiments was proportionably impaired. Had a free choice been left me, Mr. Knox would, therefore, have been made known (though with no such reserves as should involve

deceit, yet) in that way of guarded disclosure which I judged best calculated to make a favourable impression. Such choice has not been left me. I am forced on such a display as is unreservedly open, in order to remove erroneous estimates by the disclosure of the whole truth. The world will now see him (so far as his own language, in the very depths of his closet retirements, can declare him) exactly as I have access to him, and as he believed himself to be. The result will not be unfavourable. On the contrary, I am convinced I have been forced upon a step, which (though freely I could not have taken it) will, of all others, tend most to shew Mr. Knox, personally, in his most engaging aspect, and under the purest light. He will be seen as one whom "the Lord chastened and corrected;" but whom He "gave not over unto death;" as one who, "from his youth up, suffered" God's "terrors with a troubled mind;" yet as one who had always a refuge to fly to. In the lowest depths he was enabled substantially to possess the Christian's hope along with the Christian's suffering. "Always bearing about, in the body, the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be manifest in his body;" always believing that the utmost he could be called to endure was only for his real good—was the work of God's mercy for the furtherance of his purposes of grace, and that all would ultimately "redound to the glory of God," and the establishment of his own consummate happiness: "for which cause he fainted not;" but, in the midst of mental distress, "whilst the corruptible body" was "pressing down the incorruptible soul," he "put his trust in God, the God of his strength;" and, though he "went heavily while the enemy oppressed him," he never, for a moment, murmured against the wisdom of the Divine dispensation, nor lost the comfort of that sustaining prayer, "O send out thy light and thy truth, that they may lead me, and bring me into thy holy hill, and to thy dwelling!"

I must assign the reason why I have been forced into a course, not precisely within the limits which I had prescribed; and, in doing this, I must make some mention (it shall be as little as possible) of myself. I shall be borne with to the extent of any such egotism as I

cannot escape from : into more than such I cannot, I hope, fall.

The history of the case is this:—In the month of August, 1836, an article appeared in the *Christian Observer*, the object of which was, to inform the public, on the authority of one of Mr. Knox's friends, that, previous to Mr. Knox's death, an important change had occurred in his "views," which, he "began to suspect, had not" heretofore "been sufficiently evangelical;" and that "to that cause he was disposed to trace the" then existing "depression of his mind." "The employment of the term evangelical shewed" his friend, "at once, that a very interesting change had taken place in" Mr. Knox's "mind, relating to the points on which" he and that friend "had been, from time to time, conversing." That friend considered that "the expression, 'sufficiently evangelical,' coming from Mr. Knox, under the circumstances of the case, imported much more, and was intended to do so, than the strict interpretation of the words would have warranted." I considered it" (says his friend) "as intended to impart to me the fact, that his mind had undergone a change, on the subjects on which we had formerly differed; that his former principles were not able to sustain him in a nearer prospect of death and eternity; and that it was to *more evangelical views* he was now disposed to look for effectual support, when the great trial of his faith should come."

His friend states; that "subsequent conversation proved, to his entire satisfaction, that his interpretation of Mr. Knox's words was a just one." And he adds, that "had he still entertained any doubt on the subject, that doubt must have been removed by an interesting circumstance, which occurred before the conclusion of their interview." "Before you go," said Mr. Knox, "you must offer up a prayer for me." The prayer was offered up, "in conformity" (says his friend) "with the principles which sustained my own mind" (that is, of course, with such as he deemed strictly *evangelical* principles). After the prayer was finished, Mr. Knox is stated to have, once and again, cordially expressed his thanks.



“The inference,” which Mr. Knox’s friend considers himself entitled to “draw from these facts,” is, “that Mr. Knox had found his theories, however ingenious, to fail him in time of need; and that he had seen it necessary to become a little child, and, in all simplicity, to embrace the testimony of the Gospel, as to the *necessity* and the *sufficiency* of Christ’s *vicarious* work, to relieve the conscience, and support the sinner in the near prospect of death and eternity.”

I have endeavoured to give a fair and correct, though a succinct, statement of the transaction, as it was first published. If, by abridging it, I have, in any respect, mutilated its form, or changed the tone of its colouring, such effect is far from my intention. And, to rectify any misconceptions into which my extracts may lead the reader, I refer him to the article, in the *Christian Observer* for August, 1836, which is headed, *The Rev. T. Kelly on the last days of Mr. Knox.*

Mr. Knox’s friend, then, was Mr. Kelly. To all who know Mr. Kelly, I need only announce his name, to assure them that the statement which he has put forth contains not a word which he does not conscientiously believe to be a correct representation of the facts. As little need I tell them, that his impulse, in making this statement, has been a desire to promote what he deems the cause of religious truth; and that, in the inferences which he draws, he has been influenced by no preconceived design to distort or colour the truth, but by the persuasion, which he thought he had reason to entertain, that (though no “formal retraction of Mr. Knox’s former views” had been made) “a change in those views had really taken place. He was, I doubt not, additionally influenced by Christian joy, in being “able to thank God for the blessing thus imparted to one whom he had always loved; and who, from the state in which he found him at that period, both as to mind and body, had become to him an object of greatly increased interest.”

Personally, I do not know Mr. Kelly; but, by the testimony of those on whom I can most rely, I know him to

abound in the charity, zeal, and hopeful ardour, which I have thus attributed to him : and, from letters which have passed between us, under circumstances that might well have inflamed an angry spirit, or hardened a contracted one, I have additional cause to know, that, in the uprightness of Mr. Kelly's heart, there lives the high-born spirit of what is truly "honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report,"—the express characteristic of a Christian gentleman.

With Mr. Kelly I have been thus brought into communication, in consequence of certain notices which appeared in the Christian Observer for the January of the present year. Those notices were called forth in consequence of Mr. Kelly's letter on the last days of Mr. Knox, and of a communication from myself to the Review. They are so essentially personal to me, and so wholly innocuous, that (as altogether irrelevant to the point at issue) I pass them by without a remark.

I proceed, therefore, to the question in debate between Mr. Kelly and myself; and if, in discussing this, I am compelled to be diffuse, I may hope to be excused by all who are alive to the value of truth; and who attach to the truths which this question involves, a great, and perhaps not an undue, importance.

In examining testimonies, on both sides, it is my wish to act fairly; not, in any degree, in the spirit of a bigoted partisan. I have, certainly, a formed opinion; but, so far as I knew myself, that opinion was not confirmed until after examination of the entire evidence. I came to the inquiry with no determination of opinion: in conducting the examination, I wish to prejudice no man. I desire to lay the aspect of the whole truth open; and I leave every one (I may say with indifference) to judge impartially for himself. Truth is, conscientiously, the one object I have in view. Truth—the great truth, the truth of God's word)—*that* cannot be, in any way, affected by the result of the inquiry whether Mr. Knox thought, at the last, as he had been thinking through life. The alleged versatility of his opinions does not affect the solid character of his argument—



ative proofs. If he had died recanting every doctrine he had formerly upheld, such recantation would not weaken one link in the chain of his reasonings, nor detract one tittle of evidence from the word of Scripture, and the concurrent sense of primitive antiquity—those solid grounds on which he studiously founded. To say otherwise, is to say that the right interpretation of God's word varies with the impression which it makes, at various times, on an individual's feelings. It is to say, virtually, that, if, in the days of his impaired mental powers, Newton had begun to suspect that he was not sufficiently Ptolemaic, that doubt would have unhinged the frame of his well-compacted and immutable Principia.

But Mr. Knox's recorded sentiments will be found to bear out, to the last, the opinions and reasonings of his former years. To the end, he will be seen to be in harmony with himself; he uttered only one voice as to the uniform tenor of his doctrinal belief; his hope rested always on the same support; he derived comfort under one view of Christ, his Saviour, alone; and he confidently appealed to one only test, that, in relying so on Christ, he did not deceive himself.

There are three points to which I wish to direct attention: first, that Mr. Knox is charged with depression of spirits; secondly, that this depression is accounted for by the failure of religious support necessarily consequent on unsoundness of doctrinal opinions; or (as it is called) "not sufficiently evangelical views;" and, thirdly, that, before his death, Mr. Knox "began to suspect" the correctness of his views, and that he was "disposed to trace the existing depression of his mind to the fact that his views had not been sufficiently evangelical."

These several points are so implicated, that, in dealing with one, I may trench sometimes on the province of the others; but the reader will, I hope, without confusion, be able to retain, throughout, distinct impressions of the several portions of the one kindred and connected subject.

I apply myself, first, to the fact of Mr. Knox's depression, and of its real nature, as opposed to that which is

assigned; and, secondly, to the alleged fact that he did, himself, trace that depression to the failure of his theories, which, however ingenious, he began to suspect were unsound, or defective at least, as not being sufficiently evangelical.

As to the fact of Mr. Knox's depression, there exists no difference of opinion. All who knew him are aware that he was, through life (though with great difference of intensity at different periods), subject to occasional physical depression, from severe nervous disease. Of that, the present volumes will furnish evidence—evidence which the feelings of private affection, commiserating this frequent infirmity of the noblest minds, would, to a considerable degree, have veiled; but from which the veil is now torn by hands that have sought to shroud his mind in a darker—a spiritual—covering. The volume which contains Mr. Knox's Letters, and, still more affectingly, that portion of it which embraces his diary, will sufficiently declare the amount of his nervous depressions,—the modes in which his disease operated, and the causes to which he attributed it. We have the evidence of others, as well as of himself, to this part of our subject. I refer to the entire tenor of that volume; contenting myself, at present, with fixing the attention on some prominent features of his constitutional disease.

That it was rooted in him from youth, we possess the remarkable evidence of one of his earliest, truest, and most distinguished friends. That it rose, at one period, to an alarming height, threatening almost a temporary subjugation of his fine powers of reason, the testimony of his own pathetic writings will declare: that, through the mature stage of his existence (and, strikingly, from the time of his devoting himself wholly to the pursuit of religion) the constitutional tendency was wonderfully overruled and modified, will be seen in a course of more than thirty years' letters; and that, finally, the clouds of nature were mysteriously permitted to gather round him, but never so as to eclipse the sun of heaven, though the light was often deeply sobered, and broke out in gleams only of partial brightness. That such was his course, and such his end, these volumes will

testify: and, while they testify it, they will bear witness that his hope never failed him; that he beheld God always under one aspect; and that the character of his support was invariably the same.

The fourth volume commences with letters from the celebrated John Wesley. That venerable and amiable man was the early, the hereditary, and paternal friend of the young Alexander Knox. He loved him tenderly; and faithfully did he give him strong and cheering comfort, with sound advice. In the year 1776 (Knox being then eighteen), his great friend thus notices the fact of his depression, and accounts for it after his own way: "Your almost continual depression of spirit is a bodily as well as spiritual malady; and it is permitted to repress the fire of youth, and to wean you from the desire of earthly things." "I judge your disorder to be but partly natural, and partly divine,—the gift of God." Again, in 1777, "No, God has not forgotten you. You must not say, 'He hideth away his face, and he will never see it.' Surely God hath seen it, and He cannot despise the work of his own hands; but he frequently delays giving bodily health, till he heals soul and body together. Perhaps this is his design concerning you. Meantime, I give you a word for your consideration: 'Why art thou so heavy, O my soul? and why art thou so disquieted within me? O put thy trust in God! I shall yet give him thanks, who is the help of my countenance, and my God.'"

In the year 1778 he continues writing in a like strain: "It is a natural effect of your bodily weakness, and the turn of your mind, that you are continually inclined to 'write bitter things against' yourself. Hence, you are easily persuaded to believe him that tells you that you are 'void of every degree of saving faith.'"

In 1779: "The whole account which you still give convinces me more and more of what I have, once and again, observed concerning the nature of your disorder. It is undeniable, 1st, that you have a bodily complaint—your nerves are greatly disordered; and, although it is only now and then that this rises so high as to occasion a fit, yet it has a



constant influence upon you, so as to cause dejection of spirit: this dejection is no more imputed to you as a sin, than the flowing of the blood in your veins," &c.

In 1780: "You are very ingenious in finding out arguments against yourself; and, if you set your wit to it, they will never be wanting. Besides, there is an old Sophister who has been puzzling causes for these six thousand years, that will always be ready to supply you with reasons for every kind of unbelief."

The fact of Mr. Knox's habit of depression in early youth, amounting almost to despondency, is clearly proved by these extracts: it is clear, also, that, even then, he was accustomed to bring severe and exaggerated accusations of conscience against himself.

From 1790, in which year the last of Mr. Wesley's letters is dated, I possess, not only no consecutive record, but have discovered scarce a trace of Mr. Knox's thoughts or feelings till 1795. Soon after this period they again appear, marked in dark characters by his own hand. In 1799 a severe nervous illness withdrew him (at a time of most deeply interesting engagement) from the occupation in which he was then employed, under his friend, Lord Castlereagh; and he came to England to seek health, at once from change of air and scene, and by estrangement from the perplexities of political business. In the letters and diary of this period, he paints his depression in the gloomiest colours. He alludes to feelings of a similar character, under which he suffered in 1797, when, says he, "I went down to Derry for medical advice, which availed nothing—I fell into black despair." "But (he adds) it was not stupid despair, like what I now feel." This expression sufficiently denotes the dark and dead character of his depression at that period. For the more enlarged particulars, I refer to the diary and letters of the years 1799, 1800, 1801, and 1802.

About the year 1803 a brighter period commences. His epileptic fits had then entirely left him; and, as the consequence or accompaniment of this constitutional amendment, a quieter, more cheerful, and more settled state of spirits

was beginning gradually to dawn. In 1803 (just, as it should seem, when he was prepared to admit of such a change in his modes of living) he was introduced to an acquaintance which ripened rapidly into the most cordial of friendships, and soon almost domesticated him in the family of Peter La Touche, Esq., of Bellevue, in the County of Wicklow. Here, till the year of Mr. La Touche's death, Mr. Knox was the almost constant, and ever loved, and honoured inmate. And here, with scarcely any intervals, and suffering from little more than slight temporary indispositions, he continued to enjoy a moderate share of bodily health, an abundance of tranquil happiness, and a competent degree of animal spirits, in the serenity of a religious life, and the agreeable excitements of varied intellectual society,\* in a spot where rural sights and sounds, amidst beautiful scenery, contributed to pure and natural exhilaration. This state of things continued till 1828. His friend, Mr. La Touche, then died, at the advanced age of ninety-five; and from that year Mr. Knox's unvaried abode was at his own somewhat melancholy residence, in Dawson Street, Dublin.

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\* Mr. Knox, in a letter, dated May 24th, 1806, thus describes Bellevue; and implies the effect produced by the scenery and the society of that place upon his feelings:—"I have been here more than a fortnight; and, certainly, on this earth, I could not have been more delightfully placed. This is, doubtless, the most beautiful season of the year. After the May season comes on, and the hawthorn fades, and the cuckoo becomes silent, the youth of the year is over; but, just now, every thing is freshness and gaiety: and this is the very scene to enjoy it in. The walks are so diversified—so close, or so open—so wildly natural, or so carefully laid out—so sunk in the valley, or so elevated almost among the mountains, and so uncommonly picturesque in both, that, to a mind capable of innocent enjoyment, it is continued gratification. And then—the owners themselves—what shall I say of them? simply that they are the animating soul of their own paradise; and that they, and it, and what they do in it, in daily acts of beneficence, and in unrivalled establishments of human comfort,—in using wealth nobly, and in bearing their faculties meekly,—furnish, altogether, the loveliest exemplification of what Providence has designed high prosperity in the world to become and to produce, that this little rolling orb of ours could furnish. In order to find any happier combination, we must, I conceive, go to some better world, or wait for what this spot seems, in some degree, to anticipate—the blessedness of the hoped-for millennium."

Advancing age, failing constitution, and the sudden and total suspension of the beloved habits of twenty-five years, combined to bring back (though in much less than their earlier degrees of severity) the nervous depressions of that temperament which had constitutionally been his "thorn in the flesh." That such would be the result of his altered mode of living, had been foreseen by the ever-watchful vigilance of his best friends. Among these, if not first, yet among the first ranks, had long stood the Bishop of Limerick. "It had been your friend's apprehension, and mine," (says the Rev. Charles Forster, writing to Mr. Knox, at a period when the bodily malady was more than usually oppressive),\* "that the transition, implied in the removal of your late excellent friend, must, in the nature of things, prove to you most severely trying, from the simple fact of its throwing you, after many years of varied and delightful social intercourse, into comparative solitude; and upon your own resources, at a period, when, from weakened health, those resources could be no longer available as they had formerly been. The mere change of circumstances might suffice to try a frame of iron: how, then, could it fail to try, and to try keenly, a body and nerves so fragile as yours?"

That these combined circumstances did try the frail and sensitive being on whom they were permitted to work, is made clear by the testimony of many of his letters. To his dear friends he pathetically detailed his case, but without weak complaints, still less with any thought of an impatient murmur. They tried him; and they proved him. They were evidence to him, at once of his own weakness, and of an indwelling power. They proved that the operation of like causes had not the same prevalence as formerly to produce an equally dispiriting effect; and that, in the midst of pressure, such as he sank under heretofore, he had now a more confirmed portion of that strength which is "made perfect in weakness." "As to myself," (he writes),† "I cannot give my kind friend and you a comfortable state-

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\* Oct. 12th, 1829.

† Oct. 2d, 1829.



ment. I have gained no ground since I wrote last. I rather think I have lost ground. It would give my kind friend and you little comfort to go into particulars; and would do no good to myself. In fact, nervous distresses can be known only by those who actually feel them. It is the will of God! and, if He, in his goodness, will enable me to submit to it with patience, I shall be satisfied and thankful."

This, indeed, is the voice of plaintiveness; but there is nothing either of gloom or storm in it. It is far different from the temper of which, in his earlier days, we have heard him speaking. It is equally remote from the insensibility of "stupid apathy," and from the lowerings of "black despair."

"All things fairly considered," (says his friend),\* "we feel that you have borne yourself well; and, by the Divine blessing, you will bear yourself still better." How he was bearing himself when this was written to him, a few sentences from three remarkable letters of his own at this period will best shew. They correctly characterise the nature of his depression; and they state the cause to which he confidently attributed it. They speak also, conclusively, to the fact that his depression arose in no degree from any suspected unsoundness in the character of his religious views.

"It is curious" (writes† Mr. Knox) "what a difference there is between nervousness of the severest kind, and real morbid melancholy. Of the latter, I believe, I have not a particle; yet the former brings sensations, which, while they last, are too much of the same overwhelming nature. But then, even while they last, they consciously arise from the state of the body; and the mind feels it could be as cheerful as ever, were it not borne down by its diseased companion."

"I never had a thought of deeming my interior distresses as tinged with religious melancholy. I have regarded my case, and do regard it, merely as a nervous indisposition."‡

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\* Letter of Oct. 12th, 1829.

† Letter of Oct. 2d, 1829.

‡ Letter of Oct. 14th, 1829.

“My mental discomforts are not such as to awaken religious terrors, except *that* of my nervous distresses rising above patient endurance. I believe I may truly say that this is my *sole* religious uneasiness. And this I feel only in times of increased suffering.” “This I will venture to say, that my depressions are strictly those of disease; and that real mental distress of a religious nature has no share in the matter. I trust there is not a particle of religious melancholy in the whole course of my painful feelings.”\*

The extracts which I have given bear directly upon the points which I am considering. First, they prove the fact of mental depression; secondly, that this arose from bodily causes; thirdly, that there was nothing of a religious character in the depression which originated in bodily disease.

Mr. Knox's expressions are, in themselves, striking; and they afford clear insight into the state and character of a mind that could, at once, so suffer, and so observe. But there is a circumstance connected with them, which makes them peculiarly worthy of notice; they become doubly interesting when viewed in reference to the investigation which I am now pursuing; and as bearing on the points which it is my business to prove, and to disprove. For this graphic delineation of Mr. Knox's own case, given confidentially, for the satisfaction of one of the most intimate of his bosom friends, was penned at the very moment when reports were privately circulating, such as those which have again been recently raised; and when a precisely similar construction was put upon the fact of a depression, whose nature was not rightly understood, and whose cause was most erroneously attributed. Mr. Forster, in a letter of October 12th (replying to the first of Mr. Knox's three letters, in which he describes and comments on his own state), says, “There is one point on which I have, for some time, wished to put you on your guard. It is this: when labouring under nervous depression, be cautious to whom you communicate your uncomfortable physical feelings. To our knowledge, they have been mis-

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\* Letter of Oct. 15th, 1829.



represented, as though they arose from erroneousness in your views of Christianity. More than a year ago, excellent — apprised us of a report which had been industriously circulated among his evangelical friends, that Mr. Knox was labouring under a kind of religious despondency, owing to the unsoundness of his system; which (to use their phraseology) ‘left him without a Saviour.’ — at once repelled the insinuation, and flew to us for authority to contradict it. This was at once given; and we accounted for the misrepresentation very much in the tenor of your last letter.”

This zealously affectionate friend, in answer to Mr. Knox’s two last communications, thus closes the correspondence on this subject, in a letter dated October 19th: — “The sentiments recorded in your two notes are of great consequence, as safeguards against mistake, misrepresentation, and (it may be feared), in some quarters, too willing aspersions on the part of others. For, certain it is, you had spoken with some who *could not*, or *would not*, understand you. From what we have heard incidentally, I have little doubt that, when beyond the reach of contradiction, those would be found in readiness who would not scruple to maintain, what they had previously circulated, that Mr. Knox had lived to repent and deplore his mistaken views of Christianity. To do this, I thank God, you have completely put out of their power; or, if the attempt were to be made, it would turn to their shame.”

On these prophetic anticipations I make no remark, except to say, that, from the bottom of my heart, I clearly acquit Mr. Kelly of every thing that can bear the name of “willing aspersion;” and of every species of “misrepresentation,” except such as is founded on inaccurate recollections, or unintentional (and so far innocent, though injurious) “mistake.” He has advanced a statement in many respects similar to those which were “industriously circulated;” he has added facts, which I think he has mistaken; he has attributed to Mr. Knox words, the accurate record of which I more than question; but I am as confident as of my own honour, veracity, or Christian

charity, that Mr. Kelly is incapable of voluntarily misrepresenting a single particular. He has given rise to false notions ; but I ascribe this purely to his misconception, at the time, of Mr. Knox's feelings and sentiments, and to the fallibility of recollections, when dealing with words of nice signification, after the lapse of years.

I shall come to a detailed examination of Mr. Kelly's statement by and by. Reserving that, I proceed to the fact of a supposed doubt, on the part of Mr. Knox, as to the soundness of his religious system.

That, in the year 1829, the character of Mr. Knox's depression was, in no degree, tinctured with religious melancholy, or involved any thing of religious terrors, is, I suppose, admitted by all who will allow a conscientious and acute man to be a judge of his own case. I am now to shew, that, at that time (when he was charged with the felt "unsoundness of his system," as the real cause of his religious despondency, and it was asserted that that system "left him without a Saviour," consequently without a Saviour's gracious support), he himself not only had no idea that in his system of religious opinion there was any doctrinal unsoundness ; but that, in connexion with his understanding of the nature of evangelical doctrine, he was then actually enjoying a sufficiency (though, as he soberly judged, far from the perfection) of evangelical support. That support he conceived to rest, in every instance, on the evidence of spiritual life existing in the recipient of evangelical graces. He deemed the Gospel to be, truly, "the power of God unto salvation ;" and he sought the demonstration of an effectual Saviour, in the fact of the perceptible presence of the power of God. So long as he experienced this, so long (however weakly he might experience it) was he sustained. In proportion to its prevalence, his inward comforts rose in strength : these, he declares, were all he desired and sought ; and these, he says, were never wholly withdrawn from him. "The utmost I ever intentionally said" (to those who had represented him as in doubt and desponding), "was, that I lamented my own deficiency in the spiritual life ; which,

if stronger, I thought would more perfectly support me under my present trial.”\* “Nothing has, first or last, been further from my thoughts than the supposition of religious error having the smallest share in my case. At this moment I must declare, that I know not how I could understand our Redeemer’s divine discourses, and the writings of his Apostles, otherwise than I have done, and do. And in my own pursuit of the religion of the heart, I am conscious of no questionable character in the blessing I have been looking for, which was to make me doubt whether I have not been following a ‘cunningly devised fable.’ On the contrary, I always thought that my sole defect lay in not more fully possessing the blessedness, which I (feebly, but sincerely, and from the fullest conviction,) was pursuing.

“They ought to know, that no religious views whatever are proof against nervous obscuration. On this point, I refer to the chapter of Doddridge’s *Rise and Progress*, on a Christian walking in darkness. But I must say, that I do not consider this to be my case: for I trust I sensibly love religion; and have had, I hope, support from time to time, tending to shew me that I had no reason to suspect myself of having been in a wrong way.”

It was thus that Mr. Knox judged respecting himself; and thus that he spoke of himself, unreservedly, to his friends. There can be but one test of self-estimate more; the appeal which the heart makes in prayer to God, under a sense of its wants, when asking for relief, and for the supply of its necessities. That test I possess. Let it speak what was, then, the state of Mr. Knox’s inmost heart and mind,—what the nature of the wants which he felt, and of the discomforts under which he was labouring. They arose (as he himself has expressed it) solely from a felt “deficiency in the spiritual life:” what he supplicated was, continual and enlarged supplies of that life,—more and more of the religion of the heart. This, as drawn from God in Christ, was the strength on

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\* October 14th, 1829.



which he relied ; a strength which, he was well assured, would "support him under his present," and under every possible future trial and exigency.

Out of the depths of nervous weakness, it was thus that Mr. Knox's spirit cried unto God in prayer. "Merciful and gracious God ! help me in this my great distress ; and, above all, help me by deepening thy holy religion in my heart. Oh ! for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ, grant me this most necessary blessing in the way thou seest good. I would fain say, with my whole soul, deepen thy holy religion in me, and enable me more than ever to take refuge in Thee from the present stormy wind and tempest. I entreat Thee, hear this petition, and answer it in the way Thou judgest best.

"At this time I greatly need some relief. Man cannot aid me ; Thou alone canst. Thou seest I am oppressed ; my God, undertake for me and help me. But, above every thing, I still say, deepen thy blessed religion in me ; deepen faith in me, and strengthen that which is weak, and supply that which is wanting in my soul. Oh ! preserve me, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, from extremes of temptation ; nor suffer me to be tempted above what thou wilt enable me to bear. I humbly implore this infinite mercy at thy hands.

"Give me opportune relief, as Thou, in thy wisdom and mercy, shalt see most fit : but in this extremity forsake me not. And make my present trial the means of endearing thy holy religion to my heart, and of uniting me more closely to Thee, O Father ! and to Thee, O Incarnate Saviour ! than ever yet I have been. Oh ! grant me this inestimable blessing. And do Thou, O God ! for Christ's sake, enable me to pray to Thee, to trust in Thee, and to commit myself to Thee.

"Lord ! thou seest I am greatly oppressed. Again I say, if it be thy blessed will, grant me some alleviation of my trial ; and for Christ's sake preserve me from more than I shall be able to bear. Oh, suffer not my hope to perish, nor let thy mercy seem to forsake me. And again I say, deepen thy blessed religion in my heart ; and when

I cry to thee, cast me not off, nor make, I entreat thee, as though thou heardest not.

“I acknowledge, and humbly thank thee for, thy mercies hitherto. Oh, continue them! And again I say, for I cannot say it too often, deepen the life of grace and the power of religion in my heart. Thou seest how much I need this: oh! grant me this blessing, and I will praise thee while I have a being. Oh! teach me by thy blessed Spirit, and completely subdue my mind and heart to thyself.

“Oh! hear and answer these petitions in thy condescending goodness, for the sake of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Saviour.”

These, surely, are the tones of a suppliant who, like his adored Master, (I speak reverently, and in due depreciation of the servant,) “being in an agony, prayed more earnestly.” They are the reiterated complaint of one, who, “being exceeding sorrowful,” “prayed again, speaking the same words.” He knew but one want, and he knew of but one supply for that want; his want was, more of the grace of Christ; the sole supply of that want was the indwelling influence of the Spirit of God his Saviour. His hope rested on God in Christ: “for the sake of Jesus Christ” alone, did he come to the throne of grace, seeking mercy. His prayer was for the recruit and strengthening of the spiritual life in him, for the deepening of heart-religion. Again and again did he say, (for he felt that he “could not say it too often”), that *this* was the one thing which, to comfort his soul, he needed,—“deepen the LIFE of grace in me; deepen the POWER of thy true religion in my heart.”

This prayer is not dated: I am not able to assign the precise day on which it was written. From internal evidence, I judge it to have been composed during the most distressing period of his illness in 1829. But of this I am not certain. I have no right, therefore, to assume the fact; nor, as respects my argument, have I any wish to do so. It matters not whether these sentiments were uttered at the period to which I ascribe them, or some

years earlier, or about the time of Mr. Kelly's interview, or a few days before his death. I have the means of shewing that, at the time of his death, these continued to be Mr. Knox's sentiments. That is the point which is of importance to my argument. I produce these recorded secrets of his inmost bosom now, and I shall produce others of a later date, and identically the same character, by and by, simply for the purpose of shewing that, in one and the same mode of thought, of feeling, and of expression, he was consistent to the last. Be the date of this prayer what it may, its internal character is evidence of his consistency. If Mr. Knox prayed thus some years before his last illness, then (as I will shew presently) the last prayer which he composed was correctly in the same strain of sentiment, and contained the same petitions with that of the days in which no change had ever been suspected, and when his copious writings abundantly testify that there was no change. If it was the prayer of 1829, then, on the day before his death, he spoke to God in the same language in which his heart addressed his Saviour, when (as he himself has recorded) "nothing was further from his thoughts than the supposition of religious error," and he "lamented" only "his own deficiency in the spiritual life." If it was written in his last illness, then, I think, it must be allowed that his sentiments were not, at that time, what Mr. Kelly would call evangelical; but that they were such as Mr. Knox deemed truly and deeply evangelical, and such as (however he might lament their feeble or deficient influence over him) he had constantly clung to, as the hope, and solace, and strength, of his whole spiritual life.

I do not see how these results can be avoided. I cannot discern any line of sound argument, out of which any other inference can be correctly drawn.

That the sentiments of this affecting prayer were those of his last moments, I happily possess evidence. That evidence, I, however, postpone for the present. It is the last, in point of time, that can be offered; it will, most fitly, close the series of Mr. Knox's own testimony.



Applying, as it does, to a period later than that which I am principally to consider, it must, for the present, give place to the opinions of others respecting Mr. Knox's state of mind at the most important period—chiefly during his last illness; but, in some measure, during the interval between 1829 and the time of his death. I preface all, however, with the record of his death.

On the 17th of June, 1831, Mr. Knox died, at his house in Dawson Street, Dublin. His death was thus announced, in a letter from the Rev. Charles Dickinson, for the information of the Bishop of Limerick, and of Mr. Forster; to whom the letter was addressed. This was a communication, made at the moment, to two of Mr. Knox's most attached friends; it came from one, who, on the spot, had every opportunity of observing; and it spoke, without care or reserve, whatever was then fresh in the mind of the writer. I am indebted to the friendship of Mr. Forster, for permission to make its contents public. It runs thus:—

TO THE REV. CHARLES FORSTER.

MY DEAR SIR,

21 Bagot Street, June 17th, 1831.

I HASTEN to inform you of an event, which I know will be a solemn one to you and to the good Bishop of Limerick; but which, under all the circumstances, you will not long regard as a melancholy occurrence. It has pleased our merciful God to take to himself one who has been long and deeply prepared for his presence,—our valued friend, Alexander Knox. This morning, towards nine o'clock, he was permitted to breathe his last. On Wednesday, the first symptoms of this last illness began to present themselves. I observed an oppression of his breathing, and a thickening of his articulation. I called on his medical attendants, but I found they were not under alarm. You may conclude from this, that his usual illness was not much increased.

During Thursday, the oppression continued; but he

sat up or lay on the sofa during that day, and did not retire to bed till towards eleven o'clock. Michael sat in the drawing-room during the night. He slept: but towards morning his breathing became very heavy, and he seemed not to notice any one. Mr. James Scott and Mrs. Scott were sent for; they immediately came to him, but I am not certain that he recognised them. I was sent for about half-past eight o'clock, but, before I could get to his house, the event had occurred.

You will rejoice to hear, that for some months back I have not heard him express a desponding or impatient word. He even stated several grounds on which he conceived that his God and Saviour had communicated decided improvement to his mind. He has been, indeed, calm; and was latterly of opinion (I ought to say under hope), that it was the intention of Providence to remove him by a less tedious illness than he once anticipated. I never was so struck by his countenance as this morning, when I contemplated the remains of one whom I greatly loved. There was the most perfect composure of features: and I thought even that the soul still breathed divinely in his countenance. You felt, at once, there was genius and every exalted quality of soul.

I feel it an awful event to myself, because I am convinced I am deeply responsible for the improvement which Providence gave me the opportunity of deriving from him during the last nine years.

The excellent Bishop, for whom his friendship was so warm and lively, will feel it deeply; but he will rejoice in the mercy that his illness was not permitted to be one which might have oppressed his shattered nerves. God was kind indeed to him; and never, surely, was there a soul, to whom the presence of his God and Saviour could constitute higher happiness.

I write in haste, and under fatigue. I beg you will convey to his lordship the assurances of my highest respect.

Believe me very truly yours,

CHARLES DICKINSON.



In this letter, Mr. Dickinson speaks exactly as one should have expected to hear him speaking. He speaks of Mr. Knox, as of one ripely fitted for his removal to a higher state; "it has pleased our merciful God to take to himself one who has been *long* and *deeply* prepared for his presence." Mr. Knox died as he had lived, with the power of grace reigning in his heart; that power, in which his mind had been long established.

"For some months past I have not heard him express an impatient or desponding word. He has been, indeed, calm; and was latterly of opinion (I should say under hope), that it was the intention of Providence to remove him by a less tedious illness than he had once anticipated." (Mr. Knox's "mental discomforts," it will be remembered, "were never such as to awaken religious terrors, except *that*, of his nervous distresses rising above patient endurance." That was now removed.) "The excellent Bishop will rejoice in the mercy that his illness was not permitted to be one which might have oppressed his shattered nerves." (Here is just that fear expressed, which I should suppose would have occurred to a friend's mind—the fear of bodily depression; but no thought of religious alarms or doubts. It never came into his friend's mind that Mr. Knox had doubted.) There is not an expression that has any direct reference to permanence of opinion, or the remotest allusion to change of opinion. His friend knew that, though his opinions were fixed, his preparation was based far more strongly than in opinions. This preparation, he well knew, was *deep* and *long* abiding: and, in such preparedness as this, "never, surely," says he, "was there a soul, to whom the presence of his God and Saviour could constitute higher happiness."

Mr. Dickinson's evidence is satisfactory, as far as it goes: but it is rather negative than positive, as respects the specific alleged change. It has no allusion to any supposed change. The thought of any change had never crossed the writer's mind; he could not, therefore, glance at it.

The next testimony is of a somewhat more positive

character. It is given after the supposed change had been heard of. The Rev. John Jebb, writing to me on that subject, meets the charge of altered doctrinal sentiments in terms of the strongest disclaimer. "The idea of any such change," says Mr. Jebb, "was a notion, which nothing but the most profound ignorance of that venerable person's (Mr. Knox's) character could for a moment have supported."

Mr. Jebb "saw Mr. Knox in the month of May, but a few weeks before his death." He found him suffering much from nervous debility. "The conversation (as in the instance of Mr. Kelly, and as was usually the case,) began upon the state of his health. Mr. Knox expressed himself as feeling unusual discomfort; at the same time, as clearly convinced that his malady was purely physical,—a nervous derangement. This preliminary topic being finished, there was a short silence; till he introduced, of his own accord, a religious subject." The subject on which Mr. Knox began, Mr. Jebb does not remember; but he has a clear recollection of the course which the conversation pursued, and the topics which it embraced. "On the subject which he had chosen, Mr. Knox spoke with all his accustomed vigour and decision, but with more brevity and condensation than usual. I followed up his remarks (says Mr. Jebb) by some observations of my own; to which he assented as I went on; and, when I paused, he said with considerable energy, 'Go on, you are right:' and shortly after resumed the subject himself, with all the fire and animation for which his discourse had been so remarkable."

The subject was "one of those topics which I had frequently heard him discuss; and into which, those catholic opinions of which he was so distinguished a defender, largely entered. The opinions he supported and illustrated, were those from which he had experienced comfort himself, and had taught others to seek it."

Here is something approaching to positive. The depression continued; it was physical, nervous depression; he could cast it off under the excitement of religious ani-

mation; that excitement grew in conversation on his customary topics; in them he maintained catholic opinions, (the views not of a party or a period, but those which had the concurrent consent of church antiquity.) And these catholic opinions were such as he experienced comfort in; (therefore they had reference to the terms of his acceptance with God.) They were the opinions which Mr. Jebb had often heard him maintain; such as Mr. Jebb maintained himself; and such as Mr. Knox eagerly exhorted him to go on maintaining.

This last circumstance is a strong feature in the case. Had there been a change in Mr. Knox's doctrinal views, he was bound to communicate the fact of his altered views to his young pupil: he was bound not to leave him in the delusion from which the master had freed himself; not to encourage him to go on in trains of thinking, which the experienced teacher had discovered to be fallacious in the end. "I am sure (says Mr. Jebb) that he regarded me, and listened to me, as to one in whom he took an evident interest." And could he be, at once, thus tenderly interested in behalf of his young friend, and leading him onwards by a way in which he knew he was leading him wrong? There is something in the supposition utterly inconsistent: such conduct is indefensible. He who could act thus, must have lost all moral sense and all kindly feeling. I appeal to the reason and the hearts of all men,—could this have been Mr. Knox?

What was the result of this conversation on the mind of Mr. Jebb? "So little was the idea of any feeling of misgiving as to religious truths, or of despondency as to religious comforts, communicated to my mind, that I left him with that buoyancy of spirit which his conversation never failed to communicate to me; and with an increasing conviction" (not that he had received any new light which had dispelled the clouds of former error, but) "that he had been long and truly acquainted with that heavenly wisdom, whose ways are pleasantness, and whose paths are peace."

About the same time, Judge Jebb had an interview



with Mr. Knox. There was no man more capable of sagacious observation, nor more cautiously accurate, than this acute lawyer, and truly conscientious man. "He seemed to consider him, on that occasion, as more contemplative, and less diffusive, than before ; more calm — (I should rather say, less physically animated, — more calm in spirit he could not be :) fully as instructive, as *decided*, as luminous as ever. And so far from any symptom of mistrust or despondency, my father (no careless or inaccurate judge of character,) considered his frame of mind as an evidence of the soundness of long-settled principles, which the weakness of painful bodily nervousness could in no degree modify or impair."

These are the opinions of two persons very capable of forming sound judgments, from the impressions made in two several interviews, subsequent to the conversation with Mr. Kelly ; certainly within seven, possibly within four, weeks of the death of Mr. Knox.

A little before this period, (that is, on a late day in April,) the two dearest friends he had on earth visited Mr. Knox, previous to their departure for England. They never saw him again ! The impression on their minds was, that his religious sentiments were precisely such as they had been ever since they knew him ; that his hope was sufficient for the sustaining support of his spirit under a load of depressing disease, and painful bodily nervousness ; and that the mode of his reliance on Christ as his Saviour, was, in every respect, the same as that which he had been accustomed to express, deliberately, undoubtingly, and without reserve. Can we suppose that Mr. Knox (in his own opinion a dying man), suffered these two, — the dearest of his bosom friends, — to quit him, for ever on earth, under this delusion !!!

In the preceding February, one of these friends had attended him, at his summons, under the expressed conviction that he was then dying ; an event which he believed to be so sure and urgent, that he called in two of his nearest neighbours to witness the execution of his last will. To that person he then intrusted his papers. Those

papers contained many things on the most momentous of all subjects; which, on the supposition that Mr. Kelly's notions are correct, he felt to be delusive! Yet did Mr. Knox personally bequeath them without any reservation or correction! Mr. Knox, with death before him, permitted his friend to believe as truth, and to promulgate to the world as his confirmed mode of thinking, that which, at that very moment, (if his conversion were not instantaneous), he must have been "beginning to suspect" was a cunningly devised fable, — not to say, an artfully constructed lie!!! I ask all candid men, are these things possible? Can there have been such conduct on the part of such a man?

In common with many others, I deeply regret the death of one who possessed the amplest means of bearing (had he lived) the most satisfactory testimony. The late Rev. John James Digges La Touche was of the number of those who enjoyed near intimacy with Mr. Knox. He well knew the value of such a friend; and with the most diligent assiduity availed himself to the utmost of his intimacy. Few days, perhaps, passed, in which he did not visit Mr. Knox. And few persons, I have reason to think, were more conversant with the thoughts of Mr. Knox's mind. Unfortunately, there is no existing record of any conversation which Mr. Knox ever held with him.\* Mr. Digges La Touche is dead, his papers have been destroyed; I cannot (I wish I could!) avail myself of his testimony. I can use it only negatively, and through the medium of another informant. His sister, in answer to my inquiries, has most kindly replied, that she never heard him breathe a doubt of the fixedness of Mr. Knox's religious views; or suggest a suspicion that any change had taken place in the character of his long established

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\* Whilst this sheet is under my revision, I hear the following interesting anecdote. On the day before Mr. Knox's death, Mr. J. J. Digges La Touche was observed to be in a state of the deepest feeling;—on being asked the reason, he referred to the state of his friend, Mr. Knox: and when pressed more particularly, he exclaimed, "I would give my right hand to be now as that man is; he is living with God."

belief and opinions. "I do not hesitate" (she writes) "to assert, that I am sure my brother was not aware that any change had taken place in Mr. Knox's mind on religious subjects, so as to differ from his views and sentiments as published in "The Remains." And, as he was in the frequent habit of visiting Mr. Knox, even to within a day or two of his death, it is almost certain he would have been made acquainted with any such change of views, had it taken place."

That is the opinion of an impartial, and candidly judicious mind: it is an opinion with which, I think, all such minds will be concurrent.

Within a fortnight previous to Mr. Knox's death, he received the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, at the hands of the Rev. J. J. Digges La Touche, the curate of St. Anne's Church, the assistant minister of Mr. Knox's parish. That solemn ordinance was partaken of, in communion with a minister, whom Mr. Knox then wilfully suffered to remain in error as to a change in one of the most important topics of his doctrinal belief! On the supposition of such a change, would this have been to the "quieting of his conscience, and avoiding of all scruple and doubtfulness?"

The Rev. Christopher Darby, rector of Kells, in the county of Kilkenny, had enjoyed an intimacy with Mr. Knox of sixteen years' continuance; and there was, I believe, no subject on which Mr. Knox was not in the habit of communicating with him, without any reserve. Mr. Darby writes to me thus: "As well as I can recollect, I saw Mr. Knox a *fortnight* before his death. The last evening I was in Dublin, I spent with him alone. Up to that period, I can positively say no change had taken place in his religious opinions. He spoke of his increasing infirmities; his perfect confidence in future happiness; and prayed for an increased *inward* growth of what he called evangelical religion: nothing else, he said, could satisfy him. He had some fears respecting the struggle of nature with death; and said he hoped this would be spared him, (as it mercifully was). It was at that time



that he spoke to me of two persons who had come to press what they called evangelical religion upon him ; and he spoke as confidently as to the justness of his own views as ever I heard him. I have no doubt, however, that his own papers will be more valuable in determining what his opinions were, than any other document."

I should have been satisfied to rest the question here ; but my duty has been to make inquiries in various quarters ; and I have thought it candid and right to produce the result of every inquiry that I have made, as far as it bears upon the point in question.

Among the friends of Mr. Knox were many in whose mental and moral education he took deep interest ; and to whom, with the object of thus advancing them, he devoted himself with extraordinary care. Of this number was the Rev. W. Spedding. To him I am indebted for a most kind communication in answer to my inquiries. I make the following extracts from a letter, dated Ballincollog, April 3d, 1837.

"My firm belief is, that no change took place in the opinions of my dear friend, Mr. Knox, either at, or previous to, the time of his death. Indeed, I was so impressed with this conviction, that, when I read Mr. Kelly's letter, I drew up a statement ; but I felt diffident of publishing it, not considering myself to be the proper person. The substance of that statement I am most happy now to send you.

"Mr. Knox was evidently more devotional and spiritual than ever, before his death ; growing in grace, yet often expressing a want of more, (as who would not ?) as he saw the day approaching ; but certainly not embracing the forensic system.

"For the four last years of Mr. Knox's life, I had the very great privilege of reading to, or conversing with him, for several hours every day ; and during all this time I observed the greatest consistency in him.

"I leave it to those who knew Mr. Knox to decide, whether he could be capable of manifesting a change of mind to one,—and, the next moment, point out to an-

other extracts and authorities in support of the views he invariably brought forward to converse upon with his friends.

“ During my interviews with Mr. Knox, I used to put down in a commonplace book very many of his learned remarks, and the substance of almost every conversation, from his own lips. A month and a few days (May 4th, 1831) before Mr. Knox's death, he received an anonymous letter, and a tract, containing sentiments very different from his own. Upon which he said, “ I am very thankful to those good people, but my mind is made up.” And he then spoke upon the subject of justification in his accustomed way, — supporting his views, as he was often used to do, by quotations from our Liturgy.

“ The day before his death, when I entered his room, and had taken my seat to read to him (Ogden's Sermons), he leaned a little forward in his chair, and said, ‘ No, I cannot bear it ; I will rest awhile on the sofa.’ He did so; and slept about an hour. When he awoke, he said, ‘ My time is very near at hand to leave you ; but how thankful ought I to be, that, up to this moment, I have an unclouded apprehension of the great and good God ! ’ ”

A remarkable phrase, and a most cheering declaration ! the phrase he had before used in a letter now published, and which I heretofore quoted.\* The declaration, almost with his last breath, confutes the error of those who deemed him to be at any time the subject of *religious* alarm or despondency. “ Up to this time,” with “ a made-up mind,” he had viewed the greatness and the goodness of God under one unvarying aspect ; and over the Divine character, and his apprehension of that gloriously beneficent character, (whatever might at any time be the disturbance of his bodily nature), there had never come, to darken the spiritual eye of his faith, one intervening cloud.

Mr. Spedding's written recollections have done good service to the cause of truth in the person of his venerated

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\* In the Preface to the first edition of “ The Remains.”



friend. He has repaid some portion of the debt which he owes to that friend's unwearied benevolence.

I have applied in many quarters for information : and to no quarter have I turned, without receiving something that, in some way or other, tends to dissipate the erroneous ideas that Mr. Kelly's statement, if credited, must infuse. I applied to the Rev. Samuel O'Sullivan, as to one who, though by no means identified with Mr. Knox's theology, held him high in his esteem and affection, and was in the habit of much intercourse with him, in his interior mind. From Mr. O'Sullivan I have received a long, most interesting, and satisfactory letter ; the more so, because (while it is conclusive as to his opinion on the one point on which I consulted him,) it expresses certain differences of sentiment that bespeak him as little disposed to call Mr. Knox rabbi, as to sacrifice his independent opinions to any other man, or set of men. I shall make large extracts from his letter, giving all of it which bears strictly on the point in hand.

Mr. O'Sullivan writes thus :—“ Without imputing to Mr. Kelly any thing more than a mistake, my firm conviction is, that his notion of any change of sentiment in Mr. Knox, which would imply an abandonment of the fundamental principles maintained by him almost during the whole of his previous life, is most erroneous.

“ I cannot now call to mind how nearly before his death it was that I saw him for the last time ; but I know, that when I did see him last, he was so reduced that I did not think he had long to live ; and certainly nothing then occurred which could induce me to suspect that any serious alteration had taken place in his previous convictions.

“ I remember my friend the Rev. — (who, at one period of his life, had adopted most of Mr. Knox's views, but has since seen reason to change them,) having mentioned to me that Mr. Knox either complained to him of, or exhibited in his presence, a want of that religious comfort under severe affliction, by which the pious sufferer is frequently sustained, and which amounted to a sort of confession on his part, of the deficiency of the

views upon which his hopes of final acceptance were based. I saw my venerated friend soon after; and not being able to discover the slightest trace of any alteration in his religious sentiments, I ventured to question him closely upon the subject (without mentioning any name); and he denied in the most unqualified manner that he was fairly liable to any such imputation. He admitted fully the lowering effects which severe illness, to which he was exposed, sometimes produced upon him; and doubted not that he might, under such circumstances, have given expression to feelings, which zealous persons having very decidedly opposite religious convictions, might not unnaturally have considered either as evidencing the unsoundness of his views, or, at least, his own want of perfect satisfaction in them. But any thing more than this he utterly disclaimed; and seemed glad of the occasion for impressing upon me, that if at any future period such a mistake should be made about him, I should resolve it into a similar cause; and not suppose that views and principles which he had studied and tested in every way in which the criterion of truth could be applied to them, while in the fullest possession of all his powers, could, in one moment of weakness, be utterly abandoned.

“The truth is, that there were certain morbidly sensitive states of his body, in which the physical clearly predominated over the intellectual man. In those moments Mr. Knox was severely tried; and expressions might escape from him, which individuals benevolently on the watch for his conversion, might regard as favouring an object which they had most sincerely at heart, and in which they would have rejoiced, probably with a greater joy than at any other isolated event in the Christian world, by which the dealings of God with his people were distinguished. But, in this case, I need not tell you, they would fall into a great error. They would mistake the weakness of his body for the strength of his mind; and look for a commentary upon the recorded convictions of his previous life, in the querulousness of an exhausted and suffering nature.

“ Mr. Kelly I know well ; and can truly say, that I do not believe there lives a man less capable of swerving from the directness of perfect truth, or of giving even an unduly coloured representation of any transaction which he may have seen it fitting to record. He is a gentleman of the most boundless religious zeal, and the most perfect religious sincerity, having devoted, from his youth up, the whole of his energies and an ample fortune to the propagation of what he believed to be true religion. He was a clergyman of the established church ; and, had he remained in it, might, at the period of the Irish Union, have perhaps commanded a bishopric. But his religious persuasions to him were all in all ; and for them he cheerfully, and without a sigh, abandoned every earthly object, undertaking the work of an unpaid evangelist, with an assiduous and laborious earnestness that reminds one of the apostolic times ; and exhibiting, in his own person, an example of that composed and happy serenity, which is, perhaps, after all, the clearest realization to the minds of men of the efficacious reception of true religion.

“ Is it wonderful that Mr. Knox, who always sympathized with true piety wherever he found it, should have loved such a man, or delighted to hold with him at times spiritual communion ? I think the contrary would rather be to be admired. That he should have asked Mr. Kelly to pray with him, is a very clear proof that he valued the man, — as who would not desire to be united in prayer with an individual whose thoughts are habitually in heaven ? His exhibiting a readiness to join in an extempore prayer, argues, undoubtedly, a certain departure from the strictness of his previous practice, and may prove the pressure upon his weakened frame of depressing or agitating influences, such as I have before alluded to ; and by which his mental powers may have been for a brief moment impeded or suspended. But I would no more reason from this to a deliberate change in his whole convictions, than I should argue from the awful words of the Saviour upon the cross, — ‘ My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ? ’ to a belief that the Lord of Life was



under a sense of divine abandonment, at the moment when he was taking away the sins of the world. Indeed I tremble to have touched on such sacred ground; and can only plead that I write under circumstances which afford me no time to look for any equally fitting illustration, even if an equally fitting illustration could be found.

“After all, Mr. Knox’s religious views must stand or fall by their own intrinsic worth or weakness. They have not been received by any one *because* they are his. And by those who are truly competent to understand them, even if it should be found that Mr. Knox saw it fitting to change them towards the close of his life, they will not be lightly abandoned.

“The clergyman who attended Mr. Knox in his last illness, and whose testimony on the subject would be quite decisive, is no more: the late Rev. James Digges La Touche. He was a gentleman who had not the slightest tinge of Calvinism in his religious views; and I think, the very selection of him for the performance of the last solemn offices of religion, amounts in itself to a negative of the notion that there really was any change, such as that supposed, in the tenour of his religious convictions.”

I have made large extracts from this interesting letter: with the substance of which, and almost with every sentiment expressed in it, my own views of the question cordially coincide. It came into my hands, indeed, after I had written all which, in this Preface, I state as my own opinions: the independent concurrence of Mr. O’Sullivan’s, is an additional confirmation to me, that, in forming those opinions, I am right. He has touched almost every point of the question; and he has touched all well. I shall briefly recapitulate each.

First, he rejects the notion of the imputed change, conceiving Mr. Kelly to be wholly in error in that respect, though cordially acquitting him “of any thing more than mistake,” in his misrepresentation.

Secondly, he adverts to another charge of a similar character, which he named to Mr. Knox as brought



against him, which Mr. Knox explicitly denied, "in the most unqualified manner," to have any foundation in truth, attributing it to a misconception of "zealous persons having very decidedly opposite religious convictions." Mr. Knox warned him, also, "that if at any future period such a mistake should be made about him, he (Mr. O'Sullivan) should resolve it into a similar cause," &c.

Thirdly, he states correctly the fact of physical depression of the nervous system, in "certain morbidly sensitive states of Mr. Knox's body." And that, at those times, his expressions might be liable to be misconceived by "individuals benevolently on the watch for his conversion," &c.

Fourthly, he bears just testimony to the piety, zeal, virtues, and amiable qualities of Mr. Kelly; considering these as abundantly accounting (in spite of great ecclesiastical and doctrinal discrepancies) for the feeling that prevailed between that gentleman and one who so "sympathised with true piety," as Mr. Knox. He justly thinks it natural, that such genuine fellow citizens of heaven, should on earth unite in prayer. (I think it still more likely than even Mr. O'Sullivan; being aware that his sympathy with the truly religious had, on other occasions, led him into similar communion with true Christians of differing external denominations; though I am fully aware of the correctness of Mr. O'Sullivan's general statement, that Mr. Knox was much disinclined to the united use of extempore prayer.)

Fifthly, he states, succinctly and conclusively, that the present question has no bearing on the truth or falsehood of Mr. Knox's doctrinal theories; they stand on the authority of their arguments, not on the *ipse dixit* of the man.

Lastly, he avers that, had Mr. Digges La Touche been living, his testimony must have been decisive: a just and important avowal. His testimony, had it been opposed to Mr. Kelly's statement, must have crushed that statement (the avowal implies that); and it im-

plies, also, that the negative testimony of Mr. J. Digges La Touche is most weighty, that gentleman\* “not having been aware that any change had taken place in Mr. Knox’s religious views,” and it being “almost certain that he would have been made acquainted with any change of views, had it taken place.”

Under this head, Mr. O’Sullivan also ranks it as “amounting to a negative of the notion that there really was any change such as that supposed,” that Mr. Knox selected Mr. Digges La Touche (the confidential participant of his own long established opinions), and “a gentleman who had not the slightest tinge of Calvinism in his religious views,” as the person at whose hands he should receive the sustaining comforts of the body and blood of Christ, in “the last solemn offices of religion.”

I cannot but dwell on this summary. And I hope I am not violating the confidence which Mr. O’Sullivan reposes in my discretion, when I add one word on the personal character of that most estimable clergyman, as respects his own sentiments on doctrinal points. “My views (he says) are *not*, in all points, in accordance with these of Mr. Knox; neither are they what the reputed evangelicals would call evangelical.” Here is an impartial witness, as respects doctrinal bias; as respects honesty and ability, the name of Mr. O’Sullivan makes it impertinent for me to say one word.

Hitherto, I have adduced the testimony of persons whose opinions are either, to a certain degree, in accordance with those of Mr. Knox; or, at the least, not identified with that theology to which he was opposed. It may be said (though by candid minds it will not be said), that these are suspicious—or, if not so, yet—willing witnesses. I am not of the number of those who think that an honest man’s testimony will be biassed in a matter of fact by the opinions which he theoretically espouses. The moment he comes to question himself as to the truth, he

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\* *Vide* Extract from the Letter of Mr. Digges La Touche’s sister, page xxxvi.

takes into the account any colouring which his affections may impart to his views; and, in a case of doubt, he makes fair deductions on the score of this very circumstance. I attach an equal weight to the personal character of the witnesses on both sides; and, rating none more highly than those to whom in argument I am opposed, I wish to try their testimony on the simple merits of what they say; and to come to no other result than that to which their words, fairly sifted, shall lead me.

I have now to examine the evidence of those who professedly differ from Mr. Knox in doctrine; who theologically think on this point with Mr. Kelly; who knew Mr. Knox well, and loved him with true affection; who venerated him in the main; but who, on special particulars of belief, thought him greatly and grievously in error. These are gentlemen who, as much as Mr. Kelly, would rejoice to believe that Mr. Knox had indeed embraced those views, which, as in their judgment evangelical, are fraught with evangelical comfort to their own minds; and which they once fondly believed Mr. Knox to be embracing, or to have embraced. I am well aware, that in whatever degree I may shake that persuasion, I shall give a wound to their feelings as Christian friends: it will not, I trust, be a severe wound; to think so, would be to think (which I should most reluctantly be compelled to) that their concentrated regard on a point of doctrinal faith had narrowed the field of vision of their Christian hope and Christian charity. I trust to change their opinion respecting the character of their friend's views; I trust also to leave them in unimpaired security as to the genuineness of his pure vital religion.

The gentlemen whose testimonies I am about to produce and examine, I rank among my valued acquaintance: and I am pleased to know, that they allow me to call myself their friend. I will say nothing that can be at variance with the sacredness of that title: and they will not forget that it is one of the best privileges of real friendship, to "speak the truth in love."

I address myself first to the substance of two commu-



nications from James Scott, Esq., K.C., of Dublin; and afterwards to two from the Rev. William Cleaver, rector of the parish of Delgany, in the county of Wicklow. I have their permission to make such use as I see fit, both of their letters and their names.

Mr. Scott's views of the question go to support Mr. Kelly's; strongly, as he deems: how justly so, I must be allowed for myself to question; and I leave it to others to decide. Mr. Scott is too fair a man to deny me the liberty of thinking for myself on this subject; and too much a man of the world to misconceive me, when, in plain terms, I support the grounds on which I differ in opinion from him.

In his interviews and conversations with Mr. Knox, Mr. Scott had been similarly impressed with Mr. Kelly; and had been induced to think that such advance or alteration as Mr. Kelly speaks of, had occurred in Mr. Knox's religious views and feelings. "Though I could not say" (I use Mr. Scott's own words) "that he had ever, in terms, professed any decided change in his preceding religious views, yet the tenour of his language, and his disposition to listen to, and seemingly accord with, what are considered to partake of evangelical views and expressions, had produced in me *a feeling*,\* that his religious views were undergoing a considerable change; and that he had become, in some degree, as I thought, *distrustful* of his preceding system of view." "I was and am, myself, strongly impressed with a belief, that such a change in his mind and feelings, as he (Mr. Kelly) has represented, actually had occurred, and was advancing during the last three or four months, or perhaps more, of his life. I had frequently noticed it in his language and observations, *as I thought*; and spoken of it to Mrs. Scott as *apparently observable* repeatedly.

"In our interview last summer, you asked me if I had ever heard Mr. Knox, at any time, *expressly avow* or *state*,

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\* Throughout the whole of Mr. Scott's statements I use Italics for those words, or sentences, which, in his handwriting, he has underlined.



that a change had occurred in his religious views, stating that such a report had gone abroad? I told you, in answer, that *I never had*; nor did I think it likely that he would so express himself; or, possibly, be aware how far his views had undergone a change. And so far from it, that I remembered, on one occasion, when some conversation had occurred between us, which introduced, or related to what are considered, evangelical doctrines, he had said to me emphatically, ‘My dear Mr. Scott, my views of religion (or opinions on the subject) have been long formed; for myself, such as they are, I must stand or fall with them before my Master, when I come to be judged. Others may, perhaps, take a different view safely; but I cannot.’ This was the purport of that conversation with Mr. Knox; though not, probably, its very words.” “This transaction occurred a considerable time (I should think nearly a year) before his death; or, perhaps, more: and previous to the time at which his supposed change was observed, as it appears, by myself and several others. That some such change was gradually taking place during the latter period, I feel was strongly indicated (in the absence of any distinct or express avowal of it by him), not only by the general tone of his language in reference to the Saviour, and his acquiescence in the use of such language to him and in his presence, but also by one or two remarkable incidents: one of them with myself. Mr. Knox was warmly attached to the present Lady —, and felt a deep interest for her son, who died some time before Mr. Knox, and, during his last illness, had used language exhibiting a wonderful and extraordinary maturity of acquaintance with Divine truth, love for his Saviour, and joyful anticipation of acceptance with Him. His father wrote to Mr. Knox, I believe at my or Mrs. Scott’s request (I think some two or three months before his death; but this you can easily ascertain from himself, or perhaps find the letter among Mr. Knox’s papers), giving him a particular account of the dear child’s state of mind and language during his last illness, which was peculiarly striking. I had introduced the subject, and read to him some pas-

sages of letters which I had myself received, giving interesting accounts of this boy; when Mr. Knox told me he had himself received a most interesting report of the sweet boy from his father: and then, in a solemn and striking manner, said to me, 'My dear Mr. Scott, how gladly would I sit at the feet of that dear child; now to learn from him (or from his lips) the lessons of Divine truth which he could teach me.'

"I was much impressed at the time with this expression, as it seemed to exhibit his then profound humility, and also to intimate his desire of further Divine teaching, and sense of its need for himself; as if he felt and acknowledged that something was wanting in his own previous religious views."

Here is a definite fact; something tangible, and with which one can deal. And here are inferences drawn from the fact, with which one can reasonably argue.

As respects the fact, in one aspect. It is not, I think, a matter of much surprise, that any one, however deep his attainments in religious truth or spiritual experience,—whilst still detained within this fleshly tabernacle, and seeing as through a glass darkly—should, in the humbleness of devout faith, and the ardour of heavenly aspiration, profess his gladness to sit at the feet of one of those redeemed little ones, whose spirit was then before the throne of God and the Lamb; or to learn the lessons of Divine truth, while that saint of God, then in the light of the Truth himself, could teach him. This, I should think, is the feeling which all must entertain, and which most would piously utter. I could draw no inferences from this such as Mr. Scott has drawn. Arguing merely from inference, however, I might be wrong, and Mr. Scott right. But I do not argue inferentially; I have facts that prove Mr. Scott to be wrong, both in the conclusions to which he came, and also as to a portion of the facts which he has alleged (wrong, as to the latter, it is quite clear, by the fallibility of his recollections alone, and correctly stating the substance of the one main fact from which he derived



his inferences.) Mr. Scott is wrong as to the fact of this letter being written two or three months before Mr. Knox's death. I have the letter; its date is Oct. 13th, 1829. He is wrong,\* also, as to his inferences, as the date proves; for at the very time when that letter is dated, Mr. Knox thus writes (Oct. 12th, 1829), "Nothing has, first or last, been farther from my thoughts, than the supposition of religious error having any share in my case. At this moment I must declare, that I know not how I could understand our Redeemer's divine discourses, and the writings of his Apostles, otherwise than I have done, and do. And, in my own pursuit of the religion of the heart, I am conscious of no questionable character in the blessing I have been looking for, which

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\* I am anxious not to misrepresent any one; much more so, not to misrepresent Mr. Scott. I may have misconceived him. On the supposition that I have possibly done so, I will meet the case under another aspect.

If Mr. Scott means to say that his conversation with Mr. Knox occurred not about the time of the letter (Oct. 13, 1829), but actually two or three months before Mr. Knox's death (say in April or March, 1831), then my reply would be—still we come to no other conclusion; still there is no inference of versatility to be drawn from any thing that was said by Mr. Knox. In the conversation (which it seems strange should, on the part of one who had requested that the letter might be written, be introduced, for the first time, a year and a half after the occurrence, and referring to that very letter which Mr. Scott had never before named to his friend), Mr. Knox would naturally say what he said, on the ground which I have already suggested; namely, the superior scale of spiritual being in which the disembodied spirit of the child was then placed. And I farther add, that, in the sentiments of the letter itself, Mr. Knox would, at any time of his life, have concurred; there being not one expression of this interesting child, which Mr. Knox would not have deemed just, and, in the true sense of the word, Evangelical.

If the conversation occurred about the time of the letter (Oct. 13th, 1829), which was probably the case, or, indeed, whenever it occurred, it is clear Mr. Scott has, in this instance, been inaccurate in respect of dates: and we have, thus far, ground for doubting the correctness of the date which he vaguely assigns to that other conversation, in which Mr. Knox said, "On the views of religion which I have formed, I must stand or fall, &c. Others may, perhaps, take a different view safely; but I cannot." This last conversation may have been the one which occurred "two or three months before his death;" as the other, pretty surely, took the place assigned to this, and occurred "a considerable time before his death,—I should think, nearly a year, or perhaps more." The two occurrences may most fitly change situations.

was to make me doubt whether I have not been following a cunningly devised fable. On the contrary, I always thought that my sole defect lay in not more fully possessing the blessedness which I (feebly, but sincerely, and from the fullest conviction) was pursuing."

Thus Mr. Knox wrote, at the very time when, as Mr. Scott's inferences suppose, "he felt and acknowledged that something was wanting in his own previous religious views." Mr. Scott infers more correctly, when he says, "it seemed to exhibit his then profound humility, and also to intimate his desire of farther Divine teaching, and sense of its need for himself." Mr. Knox's spirit was, indeed, profoundly humble; great "need" did he acknowledge of "farther Divine teaching," day by day. He felt that his defect lay in not "knowing" more of Christ; in not experimentally knowing more "of Him, and of the POWER of his resurrection."

The above facts may make us cautious how we trust to recollection (even the honestest recollection) for dates. And they will incline us to hesitate in pronouncing judgment on the evidence of such opinions as are founded on inferences.

Inferences are all that the whole of Mr. Scott's remaining testimony rests on. "I was, and am, myself strongly impressed with a belief"—"I had frequently noticed, *as I thought*." "Mr. Knox did never *expressly avow* or *state* that a change had occurred"—"I did not think it likely that he would so express himself; or, possibly, be aware how far his views had undergone a change!!!" "And, so far from it," &c. These are the ideal foundations on which a superstructure of opinion is built up. We know that there is almost nothing to which ardent desire may not carry an easy belief. Mr. Scott, I must avow, appears to me in this instance to have inferred too readily; though he knows the rules of evidence too well to pronounce a decided judgment from connexions so inconsequent as these.

I pass to the testimony of Mr. Cleaver. Mr. Cleaver, like Mr. Scott, rests his opinion on inferences; and he,



too, has his facts. His inferences, I think I shall shew, are incorrect; and, of his facts, one makes conclusively for my side of the argument. I make my comments, partly on a memorandum of a conversation between Mr. Cleaver and myself, drawn up originally by me, and submitted at the time to Mr. Cleaver for his corrections (this is now before me with his corrections), and partly from a subsequent letter of Mr. Cleaver's, in answer to inquiries still more definite: both these documents were asked and granted, for the practical purposes of this very inquiry, and both have been furnished by Mr. Cleaver with that readiness and unreserve which characterise upright intention and good faith.

This most amiable and respectable man, "having, for a length of time, been in the habit of intimate religious conversation with Mr. Knox, and having always listened to him with delight and edification, had," nevertheless, "had occasion often to regret what he had deemed deficient views in Mr. Knox's mind, of the constraining love of Christ, as the great motive through which the Holy Spirit operates on man's heart with saving efficacy."

Mr. Cleaver conceived this love to be deficient principally, "as not resting sufficiently on Christ in respect of his passion and death, and their immediately connected consequences." But, in a visit to Mr. Knox about six weeks before his death, an impression was made on Mr. Cleaver's mind, as though a beneficial change had taken place in this particular respect, in Mr. Knox's views and feelings. Mr. Cleaver received this impression in consequence of a communication made to him of two extraordinary occurrences, which, at two several times, had happened to Mr. Knox; in each of which, such a manifestation of the love of Christ the Saviour had been vouchsafed to Mr. Knox, as had left, upon his mind and heart, the most cheering influences of a spiritual consolation, granted in seasons of deep inward humiliation and distress.

This impression was not derived from any avowal,

on Mr. Knox's part, "that he took the same views of the special love of Christ as those which Mr. Cleaver had often urged on him;" but "from the general tenour of his conversation, and the warmth with which he spoke of the comfort derived from such extraordinary manifestations of the love of Christ to him, and the light of God's countenance thus resting on him."

Now, I possess the record of these extraordinary occurrences: it is in Mr. Knox's handwriting; drawn up for the correct information of a particular friend. What does he state the communications to have been? and what is the character of the comfort which he really derived from them?

There were, in all, four such manifestations: on two only, however, did Mr. Knox lay much stress; and, probably, these alone were named to Mr. Cleaver. "I scarcely know (says Mr. Knox) how to describe any of them with precision, except the last. Besides, the first and second were not very distinguishable; the one, as well as the other, being a kind of momentary specimen of the happiness afforded by a subdued and spiritual frame of mind and heart; the latter had, perhaps, more in it of evangelical spirituality. The third, was a view of the moral excellence of the Christian religion; the particulars of which I cannot recall, and retain only a feeling of the brightness and beauty of the mental view, and of the satisfaction which it gave me during its short continuance. The fourth, I have laid the most stress upon; because, in addition to an engaging sense of Deity, as of the one object of the heart, I had, also, in however slight a degree, a more conscious attraction to our blessed Saviour, as God Incarnate, than I ever felt before. I humbly hope there was nothing delusive in it."

That is Mr. Knox's narrative; no doubt, in substance, identically the same as that which Mr. Cleaver heard; in expression, I doubt not, pretty closely similar in both instances; for Mr. Knox was not a man who dealt in vague generalities, or indefinite modes of expression.

Now, in all this, what is there really to justify any the most remote idea of any novelty of opinion, of any change, either in feelings or views? His mind is made to dwell with singular vividness of impression on "the happiness of a subdued and evangelically spiritual frame of mind and heart;" on "the moral excellence of the Christian religion;" on "Deity, as the one object of the heart;" and "on our blessed Saviour, as God Incarnate," with a more than ordinary (however to Mr. Knox's eager aspirations it still appeared a feeble) "degree of conscious attraction." These are the very topics on which his mind dwelt continually; the very objects which he "kept and pondered in his heart." They were so familiar to him, so identified with his mental consciousness, that (though I am far from doubting whether there was not something graciously supernatural in the power with which the ideas were impressed) the current of thought and feeling might well be traced to a natural rise. The "hills" among which his mind lived, and to which he looked for his help, those in which these refreshing streams of comfort sprang, were the pure spirituality, the moral excellence, of the religion of Christ established in the heart—God reigning supremely, and filling man's heart and mind. "The object (said Mr. Knox) which faith reveals with the deepest effect on us, depraved, weak, sensitive creatures as we are, is God manifest in the flesh; a view of the Divine Redeemer, as living, acting, teaching, dying, rising, reigning, and now our ever present friend and benefactor; the shepherd of our souls, the elder brother of our spirits, the king of our hearts; (but I would say *dying*, with peculiar emphasis; because, to know the crucified Redeemer aright, must crucify us to the world, and the world to us.) Such a view of this transcendent object as begets predominant love, is the faith by which our paralysed souls are re-animated, our worldly minds made heavenly; for Jesus Christ is all excellence; and to love him truly, is to love all that is worth



loving in the universe. It is the tuning of the heart, the fitting it for the universal concert.”\*

If I had been called on to produce an evidence to the *unchanged* tenour of Mr. Knox's feelings and views, I should, among innumerable other proofs, have placed my finger on this one fact,—of God's Spirit thus powerfully impressing his mind with comfort, through those very thoughts on which his whole soul had habitually fed; and in the nourishment of which, it was now divinely strengthened.

The time of these comforting visitations is not a little remarkable. His first communication of the fact to any friend was on the 2d November, 1829. “Within a little more than the last twelve months,” said Mr. Knox to that friend, “I have four times felt extraordinary comforts.” Now, these were exactly the twelve months of more than common nervous depression; the period at which, as his friends had foreseen, transition from circumstances of peculiar enjoyment to others much less satisfactory, “must, in the nature of things, prove most severely trying.” This year embraced, moreover, that time in which he had been represented as “labouring under a kind of religious despondency, owing to the unsoundness of his system;” which system, as it was said, “had left him without a Saviour.” It was in this very season that this chastened servant of God was visited with peculiar manifestations of the love of God towards him, of the grace of God his Saviour, dispensed in the way of extraordinary cheering light. The thorn in the flesh was not taken away; but the grace of Christ was proved to be sufficient for him. It sufficed; it substantiated, to his feelings, all that he needed to be realised in order to the support of his faith and hope on earth. It sensibly convinced him of the healing efficacy of Christ; in whom, while bruised, he trusted: it evidenced with power the soundness of those views of Christianity on which he had

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\* *Vide* Vol. I. p. 163, 1st edit.

built his trust. "He looked on these (said that friend to whom he first named them) as sent from God to impart light to his mind in the midst of its own darkness; he was content to wait, knowing that there was love behind the cloud which obscured it: and feeling that, yet a little while, and there would be an opening; beyond which, all would be glory."

I have now done with Mr. Cleaver's inferences; and I come to his main fact,—the fact, namely, of his having prayed with Mr. Knox; and the results of that act of prayer, as they are stated by Mr. Cleaver.

At this interview, or on a former occasion (but Mr. Cleaver thinks it was on a former occasion), Mr. Knox desired that Mr. Cleaver would pray. I have taken great (I fear almost troublesome) pains, to bring Mr. Cleaver's mind to an accurate recollection as to whether it was at a former, or at a still later time: but he cannot fix the period with accuracy; and he is, therefore, very correctly cautious of assigning any precise date. He is "satisfied that it was not upon the same occasion, when" Mr. Knox "asked him to pray, were it only (says he) that I remember he was at the one time cheerful, at the other, depressed."

"I cannot positively undertake to say that the time of the *happy* communication was subsequent to that of the prayer; though my strong impression is, the more I think of it, that it was: or I cannot but think, to say no more, the prayer would have been of another cast, and more in the strain of thanksgiving, than, as far as I remember, it was." Whether before or after, it was much about the same time; that is, about six weeks, more or less, previous to the time of Mr. Knox's death.

In this prayer, Mr. Cleaver "brought prominently forward those views of the love of Christ (as manifested in his death, and in the effect of that death on the pardon of man's sin), which he conceived, and still conceives, to be strictly evangelical." What those are, is well known. "When we rose from our knees, Mr. Knox expressed himself not satisfied with what had been the principal

subject of my prayer,—that he might have deeper impressions of what had appeared to me not sufficiently prominent in his religious views.” “He observed, as far as I remember, that I had not prayed for what he felt the great want of.”

It is self-evident that Mr. Cleaver remembers correctly aright. What Mr. Knox felt the want of, was not what his friend deemed “more strictly evangelical views;” but the spirit of evangelical religion operating more sensibly in his whole soul; “the deepening of the life of grace, and the power of religion in his heart;” for such “teaching of God’s blessed Spirit” as would “completely subdue his mind and heart to God;” the “adding solidity and depth to what” his God had already “prepared for him:” in a word, for the “working and deepening” of the Holy Spirit’s “own invaluable work in him, for the Lord Jesus Christ’s sake.”\* These were, in Mr. Knox’s estimate, really “evangelical views;” for this he knew to be (and he longed to feel it more and more to be) true, pure, and undefiled, evangelical religion.

I revert now to the statement of Mr. Kelly; which, at the first, I was compelled to bring forward; but which will be best considered, and reasoned from, in the present place.

But, before I turn to it, I shall best satisfy my own feelings, and discharge what is, in my mind, due to courtesy and justice, by addressing a few prefatory words to Mr. Kelly himself; not exculpatory, not apologetic, not merely in the way of conciliatory explanation; but in the tone (so far as I have the ability to use it), and in the spirit (so far as the grace of God shall empower me to preserve it) of a man addressing his fellow man, of a brother striving amicably with a brother, of a Christian contending for the cause of truth and for the character of one of God’s departed saints, in conscientious opposition

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\* I quote these words from the prayer which Mr. Knox wrote on the day before his death; which prayer is given as the concluding evidence.



with one to whom he gives superior honour, as a more advanced Christian. Mr. Kelly and I already understand one another, appreciate one another, esteem one another; there is nothing in the cause in which we are engaged that should indispose us to come out of the contest loving one another. I have never questioned Mr. Kelly's rights or motives; as little, I know, does Mr. Kelly doubt or dispute mine. All this is already in private explained. It has been claimed and conceded mutually between Mr. Kelly and myself; but it is due to ourselves, to the cause we are engaged in, to truth and to charity, to that Christianity of whose word we are preachers, and, above all, to God, of whose Spirit we are ministers, and whose peace-inspiring message we bear;—to all these motives it is due, that what has been privately understood shall be publicly declared: that it shall be evidently seen, that under the banner by which we are ranged, each may “withstand” the other “to the face;” and yet, neither violate the peace of God, nor suffer any loss of inward or outward charity.

Mr. Kelly is prepared for the part I am now taking; he has told me, that he knew from the first his statement must call forth my reply. When he heard that I had cautioned the public to suspend their judgment on the subject of his letter, “I will tell you honestly (says he) that I did expect you would do something of the kind.” He has freely proffered his assistance in sifting out the truth in this inquiry: “If you know of any thing that I can do to enable you to arrive at any information on the subject that you are not possessed of, you may command my services.” He claims (as he has most just title to do) a right of counter-vindication: “I know you will not be at all offended with me afterwards, if I should see it necessary to say any thing for myself.” It is impossible I should be so; Mr. Kelly is as far above giving, as I hope I am from taking, an undue offence.

In examining Mr. Kelly's statement and reasonings, I shall, I trust, violate no one delicacy; duty and feeling will equally guard me against that. But I shall unscrup-

pulously discard all reserve; that is no less my nature, than my duty. The candid avowals of my opponent have already removed all fear of my unintentionally wounding him. He has himself told me that he knows I must attribute to his statement the effects of misrepresentation: more than this I never thought of imputing to him; this charge I shall never retract. Mr. Kelly, like an honest and honourable man, has avowed that I never retracted it. "I said, in my letter to the *Christian Observer* (it is thus Mr. Kelly writes to me), that you had sent me a kind and courteous letter, acquitting me of any *intention* to mislead. How I expressed this I cannot recollect, but I am sure I said nothing, at least intentionally, which could be construed as implying any retraction, on your part, of your expressed opinion as to the matter of fact, namely, that my statement (though not chargeable with misrepresentation in a *moral* sense), was calculated to make a false impression." This most candid avowal, Mr. Kelly makes in reference to a letter addressed by me to him; of which he writes, "If any unpleasant impression had been in my mind, it is entirely effaced by your very obliging communication."

On the point at issue, Mr. Kelly, of course, retains his own opinion; and he impugns my supposed reasons for doubting it as freely as (on grounds of supposition, too, but backed by argument) I am impugning his. He writes thus: "Declaring, as I did, my sincere conviction that you *honestly* acquitted me of intending to make a false impression (while, at the same time, you did not hesitate to express your conviction, that my statement was calculated to have that effect), I said, that I supposed you accounted for my having published the statement in question in entire consistency with honest intentions, by a reference to the feelings which a person, circumstanced as I was with respect to Mr. Knox, might be supposed to have; and having which, he might not be in a state of mind to receive perfectly just impressions, either from what he saw or heard. To which I said, that I felt myself perfectly calm and collected in those interviews with

my friend; that I was really aware of my being liable to an excitement of the nature supposed, and was on my guard against it; and that I had abstained from any communication with *any* human being, until after the death of my friend."

Mr. Kelly is, in part, right in his idea of the view which I take of the real circumstances of the case; and, in part, he misconceives it. He makes a supposition which is not fully borne out. I conceive that, with an excitable and feelingly impressible mind (he himself avows he is aware of such excitability), he was, from benevolent motives of the highest nature, predisposed to construe, in the way most congenial with his heart's wishes, whatever expressions dropped from Mr. Knox's lips in reference to evangelical religion. "Sorry I should be," says Mr. Kelly, in his first letter to me, "and *must* be, *on my principles*, to see any thing that would require me to give up the conviction I have, that my dear friend, Mr. Knox, did think and feel as he appeared to do, when I visited him in his last illness." So says Mr. Kelly most truly, and from the ground of his heart. And what say I? Glad was Mr. Kelly; and, *on his principles*, glad *must* he have been, to detect in those interviews any thing which his heart construed into an adoption, on the part of his friend, of such views of religious truth as Mr. Kelly himself deemed more evangelical than those which he had through life known that friend to entertain: views, as Mr. Kelly deemed them, better calculated to insure present peace, and, probably, more promotive of everlasting blessedness. Mr. Kelly will, of course, be equally glad, if, in his judgment, the same opinion of a change in his friend's sentiments can still be conscientiously retained. But he is too fair a man to retain that opinion, or to wish others to retain it, in opposition to real truth. Sorry as he must be to give up his pleasurable belief, "I should be," he says, "still more so to be the cause of making any impression on the public not according to truth." I am sure that he would; and, therefore, (as well as for the effectual dis-



charge of a duty which circumstances have imposed on me), I am not held back by motives of false delicacy to Mr. Kelly (which would be misplaced), from searching out closely what I believe to be the truth, and from placing it broadly and plainly before the public.

To such an inquiry I now address myself. I have stated what I conceive to be the predisposition of mind in which Mr. Kelly, on the several occasions of his interviews, visited Mr. Knox. I think, that when words were uttered which seemed to Mr. Kelly to contain the germ of the thought, his "wish" (though not "father to the thought") did most affectionately cradle and nourish it; did in solitude revisit it: neither bringing it to the test of definite expressions, by committing them instantly to paper, nor fixing them in the minds of others, by relating them, so soon as he could hurry home from the interview, to his chosen friends or his family, Mr. Kelly buried the thought, which lay germinating in his mind, and still more in his heart; until, after the lapse of several silent months, when death had closed the lips of his friend, the brooded ideas broke forth, clothed, I am sure, in such words as he then believed his friend to have once uttered.\*

What are those words? I must again quote them, as stated by Mr. Kelly. It is stated, that "about three months before his death," Mr. Knox being then "very

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\* I give, in Mr. Kelly's own words, the history of the gradual development and breaking forth of these ideas. In a letter to me, Mr. Kelly writes that he thinks "he spoke of it to his own family, very shortly, if not immediately, after Mr. Knox's death." He names two ladies as the first persons, except his own family, to whom he spoke of what had passed: it was on the occasion of his seeing them for the "first time after the death of Mr. Knox had occurred." That time I have ascertained was in August 1833, two years and two months subsequent to the occurrence. In 1835, four years after Mr. Knox's death (*vide* Mr. Kelly's printed letter), after "reading the Review of the Correspondence between Mr. Knox and the Bishop of Limerick," Mr. Kelly "prepared a letter." "Upon reflection" he "doubted whether he was called on to put himself forward;" and, "for the time, abandoned the idea:" but was at length induced to make his statement public, in August 1836, after conversing on the subject of the publication "with one or two judicious friends."

unwell," on the occasion of a visit from Mr. Kelly, made voluntarily a communication to that gentleman, to the effect that his mind was not happy; that he was "beginning to suspect that his views had not been sufficiently evangelical;" and that he was "disposed to trace the present depression of his mind to that cause."

Now, to this I answer, first: That supposing, for a moment, it were conceded that every word in the above statement is a correct report of what was said by Mr. Knox (a concession which, without any slight to Mr. Kelly, I cannot make), supposing Mr. Knox to have said, "my views are not sufficiently evangelical," it is obvious that the whole force and import of this avowal will turn upon the sense in which Mr. Knox used the term "evangelical." And for his sense of that term, we have the authority of his own written statement.\* "To be *evangelical*, is to FEEL that the Gospel is the POWER of God unto salvation." So he writes. We have also the assertion of his claim, to use the term in this its correct sense, not abandoning it to those whom he deemed to have usurped, and to misuse it. For this we have the evidence of his expressions in conversation with his friend: † "What! give up the use of a scriptural term, because of their abuse of it? No, no; never will I consent to relinquish it to them." So he speaks, with a veracity that proves the heart of his sincerity.

Men of unbiassed minds will, I think, construe rightly his use of the term. I have a pleasing proof, that a candid and discerning mind, seeking, without prejudice, to discover where the truth of this matter lay, will interpret it after this fashion. Such a man (a stranger then to me), writing to inquire what was the truth of the statements respecting Mr. Knox's asserted change, says, in reference to his use of this word, "How is it to be understood? With

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\* *Vide* Letter, Vol. IV. I have printed the words exactly, with such emphasis as Mr. Knox has himself marked by the lines scored under his writing.

† The substance of this conversation will be given hereafter more at large.

reference to the party in the church so named? or purely doctrinally, and not exclusively? or, as simply indicative of that *feeling* which, without affecting the doctrine embraced, makes a man, in the view of death, value a Saviour more and more; and, while his heart is hot within him, speak to that effect with his tongue?"

On the first supposition, then, I should contend, that, if Mr. Knox lamented over the deficiency of his evangelical *views*, all that he designed to say was, that the *sense* of religion was not sufficiently strong in his mind to make it *felt* by him in all the fulness of its acknowledged *power* of support and consolation:

But I make no such concession. I do not suppose that the word "views" was used; nor do I think that Mr. Kelly's recollections serve him aright, when he says that Mr. Knox used the words, "I begin to suspect." Through life, Mr. Knox distrusted views. He has unvaryingly borne his testimony against merely doctrinal views; he always disparagingly contrasted them with "actual experience." Was he, in a moment, to turn round, and to fly for shelter to what was theoretic, in the place of what was real? What he valued in the Evangelicals, as they are called (we have these his own recorded words\* for it), was "not their doctrinal views; but that they have been the chief instruments of maintaining *experimental* RELIGION in the reformed churches; and, *however* this may have been done, I must think it an invaluable blessing."

Such being Mr. Knox's ways of thinking through life, and, as I have shewn, at a period later than that of Mr. Kelly's conversation, I do not hesitate to avow my firm persuasion, that, from his lips, the precise words which Mr. Kelly has attributed to him did never proceed. I believe that something, akin in sound, and partially very like them, was said; but I do not believe that the words themselves (and specially the words which alone bear *distinctly* on the point at issue) were ever spoken by

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\* Letter of August 5, 1828. Vol. IV. p. 501.



Mr. Knox; nor that, while he possessed an understanding mind, and the power of connecting it with articulate speech, he could possibly have ever spoken them. I can believe that the words, "not sufficiently evangelical," were used. The words of which I believe Mr. Kelly to entertain a wrong idea, as spoken when really they were not spoken, are these, "I begin to suspect that my views." I believe these to be words, respecting which Mr. Kelly's mind has played him a trick; and of which, after the lapse of five years, he retains an erroneous, but, no doubt, a confirmed recollection.

It is not for me to assert what was actually said; but something of the following kind I can well imagine to have been said: and words to this effect I do believe were the ground on which Mr. Kelly's statement is founded: "I have to regret that my religion is not sufficiently evangelical; and I trace the present depression of my mind to that cause." This (in the sense in which Mr. Knox would use such language) is in perfect unison with the sentiments that are frequent throughout his letters. And it is to be noted, that the expression which I have allowed, and which, in its right sense, is consistently accounted for, is the precise expression which fixed itself in Mr. Kelly's mind; and on which he dwells, as pointing out to him the inferences that he drew—which, he honestly avows, were inferences—inferences, such as, "from the fact in question, I considered myself fully justified in making; and, I confess, it would much surprise me" (therefore, at the time of his statement, he was not altogether unprepared for some such future surprise), "if any subsequent fact should render that inference questionable."

I have produced subsequent facts; I have freely (I hope not rudely) questioned some portion of the original fact. It is not for me to conjecture how far this may alter the state of the questionable inference in Mr. Kelly's mind; but, if his view of the case shall have undergone a change, of that change, I am certain, Mr. Kelly will make an open statement.

I have said that it is the expressions which I allow that fixed themselves in Mr. Kelly's mind; and that on these he dwells, as pointing out to him his train of inferences. I will quote his own words. "The employment of the term 'evangelical' by my friend Mr. Knox, on the occasion referred to, shewed me at once that a very interesting change had taken place in his mind, relating to the points on which he and I had been, from time to time, conversing. The expression, 'sufficiently evangelical,' coming from him under the circumstances of the case, imported much more—and was intended to do so—than their strict interpretation would have warranted."

I except against Mr. Kelly's right to any advantage from these gratuitous assertions. I contend, that the expressions are to be interpreted strictly according to Mr. Knox's known customary usage of them; and that their import is, under no circumstances, more than their strict meaning, according to such interpretation, would justly declare.

Mr. Kelly goes on: "I considered" them "as intended" (such is Mr. Kelly's inference from his gratuitous construction of a phrase in a sense which he himself owns was not strictly warranted);—"I considered" them "as intended to impart to me the fact, that his mind had undergone a change on the subjects on which we had formerly differed; that his former principles were not able to sustain him in a nearer prospect of death and eternity; and that it was to *more evangelical views* he was now disposed to look for effectual support, when the great trial of his faith should come.

The confirmatory ideas here grow in Mr. Kelly's approach to his conclusions. The term "evangelical," "importing much more than its strict interpretation would have warranted," has now substantiated the additional "consideration" of evangelical "views;"—of course confirming, in Mr. Kelly's mind, the original phrase which he attributes to Mr. Knox, and justifying him in his own regard for coming to that which he holds to be a most

satisfactory conclusion : this conclusion is, then, thus further confirmed.

“ That my interpretation of his words was a just one, our subsequent conversation proved entirely to my satisfaction.” As this conversation is not recorded, it cannot afford any species of proof or disproof to any one but Mr. Kelly himself. “ And had I still entertained any doubt on the subject (words which themselves are far from indicative of the strongest moral assurance), that doubt must have been removed by an interesting circumstance that occurred before the conclusion of our interview. When I was about to take my leave, Mr. Knox stopped me,—‘ Before you go,’ he said, ‘ my dear Mr. Kelly, you must offer up a prayer for me.’ He, then, conducted me into a private apartment, where we knelt down together ; and where I prayed in conformity with the principles which sustained my own mind, and which, I believed, were becoming dear to my valued and beloved friend. After I had finished,—‘ Thank you,’ he said, ‘ my dear Mr. Kelly ; thank you.’ It is not to be supposed, that Mr. Knox’s calling me to pray in this way was an insignificant circumstance. This is far from being the case. It was a very significant token of a state of mind quite different from his former one, in respect to the matters on which we had been in the habit of conversing. Mr. Knox had never, on any former occasion, proposed that we should pray together ; indeed I do not think he would have liked it, if it had been proposed by me. He had his own views on this subject,—views which, I believe, led him rather to disapprove of prayer offered in this way. Be this, however, as it may, it is certain that this was the first time that Mr. Knox ever proposed such a thing to me ; and I feel myself fully justified in regarding it as among the evidences of that change which his mind had undergone, on the subject of our previous communications.”

I lay no stress on the fact that Mr. Kelly’s evidence is, throughout, with the exception of the first words, cumulative or constructive : one by one, I will endeavour to break the whole structure down. To the last fact, then,



I now apply myself; the fact of this prayer of Mr. Kelly's; and to the inferences which he draws from Mr. Knox inviting him thus to pray.

This is an interesting anecdote, and very pleasing conclusions are to be drawn from it; but, as it strikes me, not exactly the conclusions which Mr. Kelly has drawn. It may appear presumptuous in me, personally a stranger to Mr. Knox, to say that I think I know him, in this respect, better than his friend Mr. Kelly knew him; and that I understand better than that gentleman understood, the feelings under which he proposed this prayer, and the spirit in which, when it was ended, he thankfully acknowledged its intended benefit. Nevertheless, I do say so, and I shall here allege the grounds of this my assertion. In the first place, though I was personally unacquainted with Mr. Knox, I know, with the utmost intimacy of unreserved communication, those who, for very many years, had been admitted into the confidence of his inmost thoughts and feelings. Secondly, through my access to his most private papers, I know his sentiments on this very subject of intercessory prayer, and the estimate which Mr. Knox made of the "much availing power of the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man." I know the affectionate esteem with which Mr. Knox regarded Mr. Kelly; that he deemed him a truly sincere and righteous man; "an Israelite indeed," "one in whom there is no guile." For these qualities, Mr. Knox gave his friend full credit; and these far overweighed, in his estimate, the depreciation in which (on certain points of discretion, judgment, ecclesiastical regularity, and doctrinal theology) he felt himself compelled to regard him. Mr. Knox judged no man's servant; to his own Master he charitably left every one to stand or fall. I know that from the prayers of all who were sincerely devout, Mr. Knox looked for aid; that in joining with those with whose hearts he held communion in one spirit, he derived comfort. He asked the prayers of many from whom, in speculative doctrines, he more or less widely differed. He communicated, occasionally, in private

prayer, with some from whom, ecclesiastically, as well as speculatively, he was disjoined. He has prayed with, and asked the prayers of, individuals of various denominations. Wheresoever he saw that the spirit of piety had built an altar; wheresoever that edifice was raised with the living stones of what he deemed the essential catholic doctrines,\* there did Mr. Knox acknowledge the presence of a true worshipper; the sympathy of such a votary he cordially valued; and with the outpourings of such a heart in its devotions his enlarged charity disposed him to join. He was not given to meddle with the minor points of opinion, on which they separated; his principles led him rather to let the currents of devotional feeling mingle together in the far more momentous identities in which they agreed. "I think it is the wisest mode (was his avowed sentiment†) to let well-meaning persons go on in their own way; inasmuch as that may be the way best fitted to their particular constitutions." Thus we find him saying in the case of one from whom he was even then avowing his specific differences. "Pray for me, and request ——— to pray for me," was his injunction to two friends with whom he was in habits of the most cordial mental agreement; and, in the same letter, he asks the prayers of those from whom, on the specific point of what are called the Evangelical terms of acceptance, he differed: "Tell my kind and good Mrs. Cleaver, that I request her and her good husband's prayers also.‡ You see what I wish to be the main subject of them." Of every good person, Mr. Knox valued the prayers.

It is on these grounds that I believe Mr. Knox to have sought the prayers of Mr. Kelly; to have joined

\* Viz. the Trinity in Unity; the incarnation of the Second Person, very God of very God; and the influences of the co-eternal Spirit, as real as they are necessary, in order to regeneration and sanctification (life and growth).

† Unpublished Letter, January 21, 1831.

‡ Namely, "That God would deepen the sense of religion in me; that He would bless me with more of the spirit of prayer; with more of the vital knowledge of the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent," &c.—Letter, Sept. 11, 1829, Vol. IV. p. 555.

cordially in *the spirit* of those prayers, and in the tenour of their expression, so far as he could join. In one respect, he and his friend were "like minded:" they were both "having the same love." And well did Mr. Knox know (and now, as superior to all doctrinal considerations, did he feel) that a day was fast approaching when, in the blaze of that one love, all differences of doctrinal opinions would disappear; that to those who were "perfect" in being "thus minded," "if, in any thing, they were otherwise minded, God would reveal even this to them." He was willing to merge the difference in the agreement now, and to wait for the time of full and uniform revelation.

It was not for a man of an enlarged heart, and with the view of the eternal world open before his eyes, to vex his soul by disturbing the harmonies of the spirit of prayer with disputation of those questionable points, which, in easier and less endearing moments, had been the subjects of previous conversations and differences. Even the bodily strength and animal spirits were unequal (and, we may well believe, indisposed,) to arguments implying conflicts on thorny points of theology. He was, probably, in his own\* words, at that moment, "as unable to argue points, as to get up and walk a mile." But his heart could respond in sympathy with the affection and devotion of his pious friend. And in rising from the steps of the altar of their common Saviour, it was the spontaneous impulse of a grateful heart, to vent itself in thanks for such comforts as had been drawn down by prayer from the throne of grace, even to the fellow creature whom the grace of God had made an instrument of procuring the blessing.

How much there was of true wisdom, real charity, and Christian forbearance, in this conduct, I feel more than I may be disposed to say. I unhesitatingly aver that here were all; and that the two former graces evinced themselves in a conspicuous degree in the exer-

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\* Letter, June 9, 1831. Vol. IV. p. 631.



cise of the last, in his maintaining thus a prudent but uncompromising forbearance.

Forbearance, however, must have its limits. And, in Mr. Knox, I well know it was tried and exercised to no common amount. Many were those who urged their own views upon him with a freedom and a pertinacity which nothing could justify but the motive that prompted them to this friendly persecution—regard to the best interests of their friend's immortal soul. He bore much; but, occasionally, he was compelled to repress what he could not bear without injury either to his own mind, or to the cause of those truths which it had been the business of his life to advocate. We have a remarkable instance, in which he felt himself called on at length to speak out; and that to one whom he valued highly as a friend, and from whose piety he had more than once asked the aid of prayer. One to whose very nature it was impossible that he should obtrude; and who, in fact, I know, always studied to enter with Mr. Knox on subjects, respecting which they could feel in harmony. I allude to the occasion on which Mr. Cleaver prayed with him at his request; when, as Mr. Cleaver erroneously conceived, his heart was longing for what he (Mr. Cleaver) deemed to be true evangelical consolations. This was subsequent to the time of Mr. Kelly's praying in a similar strain. The prayer of Mr. Kelly might, even then, be fresh in Mr. Knox's mind, and acting as an additional incentive to his speaking in terms so explicit, that no doubt could any longer remain as to the constancy of his well known and long established sentiments. Speaking out, then, "when Mr. Cleaver rose from his knees, Mr. Knox gave him to understand that his mind had not gone along with him in what had been the subject of his prayer." "He observed, as far as I remember, that I had not prayed for what he felt the great want of." "Mr. Cleaver certainly felt, when he left Mr. Knox on that occasion, that there had not been the communion of mind which implies a feeling of satisfaction, in such prayer."

This is exactly what I should conceive a charitable and peaceably inclined, but, withal, an honest and wise Christian would do. "In the unity of the spirit, and the bond of peace," he would forbear much: but there are limits which cannot safely be transgressed: the consistency of his Christian profession was not to be compromised by permitting it to be repeatedly misconceived; the word must at length go forth, which would place the settled convictions of his mind beyond the reach of misconception.

Mr. Cleaver "had not prayed for that which Mr. Knox felt the great want of;" and, by the test of that declaration, neither, assuredly, had Mr. Kelly, in those petitions which he thought it right to bring prominently forward, prayed for that which Mr. Knox felt to be the great object of his soul's want. "My increased exigencies" (it is thus that he writes in the distressing period of 1829) "made me more alive to the value of the *power of religion*, and of *those communications of Divine grace*, of which they" (that is, the professors of what are commonly called evangelical sentiments), "with the exception of John Wesley, &c., had been, hitherto, the most zealous maintainers. I seemed to myself, also, to feel that *whatever errors might be mingled* with the *views* of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, when really devout (as Doddridge, for instance), they had a *cordial*, and, as it were, *vital*, apprehension of our blessed Saviour, which gave them an advantage over *me* in a day of trial; and the attainment of which, *in a strictly scriptural way* (I might say, as to the substance of it, in George Herbert's way), would be to me an unspeakable happiness in sickness and health, in life and in death." Here is plain evidence of what he lamented, in the fact that his religion was not "sufficiently evangelical;"—that the sense of Divine things was not impressed with an adequacy of sustaining power on his heart; that his "apprehension of our blessed Saviour" seemed to him "not as cordial, and, as it were, vital," as the apprehension of those, who, whilst "error mingled with their" doctrinal "views of" Christ's "grace,"

had, in this their *cordiality* and *vitality* of religion, “a seeming advantage over Mr. Knox in a day of trial.” To a devout evangelical (to Mr. Kelly, for instance), Mr. Knox, in his humility and charity, could turn, as to one who, having a more vital hold on Christ than himself, could more powerfully and effectually than himself, intercede for grace (for the supply of that very grace which *he* stood in need of) in prayer. He looked up to such a Christian, notwithstanding what he deemed doctrinal errors, with respect proportioned to the reality of his spiritual communion with God in Christ. Gladly would he have possessed the consolations which he saw that truly faithful and devoted (but, as he deemed him, that doctrinally erroneous) Christian had attained; gladly would he have possessed them—but, on one condition; namely, that he should possess them “in a strictly spiritual way.” And what was the way which Mr. Knox specifies as strictly spiritual? “As to the substance of it,\* George Herbert’s way—“that is to say, doctrinally,

\* The following extracts from the Life of George Herbert, by Isaac Walton, may, perhaps, give a sufficiently correct notion of the substance of that “way” to which Mr. Knox here alludes.

“About one month before his death, his friend, Mr. Ferrar, hearing of Mr. Herbert’s sickness, sent Mr. Edmund Duncon to see Mr. Herbert, and to assure him, that he wanted not his daily prayers for his recovery. Mr. Duncon found him weak, and, at this time, lying on his bed or on a pallet; but, at his seeing Mr. Duncon, he raised himself vigorously, saluted him, and with some earnestness inquired the health of his brother, Ferrar; of which Mr. Duncon satisfied him. And, after some discourse of Mr. Ferrar’s holy life, and the manner of his constant serving God, he said to Mr. Duncon, ‘Sir, I see by your habit that you are a priest, and I desire you to pray with me.’ Which being granted, Mr. Duncon asked him, ‘what prayers?’ to which Mr. Herbert’s answer was, ‘Oh, sir! the prayers of my mother, the Church of England; no other prayers are equal to them: but, at this time, I beg of you to pray only the Litany, for I am weak and faint.’ And Mr. Duncon did so. \* \* \* \* \*

“Mr. Duncon, who returned from Bath the fifth day, then found Mr. Herbert much weaker than he left him: and, therefore, their discourse could not be long; but, at Mr. Duncon’s parting with him, Mr. Herbert spoke to this purpose:—‘Sir, I pray, give my brother, Ferrar, an account of the decaying condition of my body; and tell him, I beg him to continue his prayers for me; and let him know that I have considered *that God only is what he would be*, and that I am, by his grace, now become so like him, as



in the way of primitive Catholicity, no less than experimentally, in the way of sensible, predominant, sustaining, rejoicing grace; doctrinally, in the way of that Church, which for fourteen centuries knew nothing of those doctrines which so large a portion of Christendom deems strictly evangelical now; which many individuals maintain as the root and essence of evangelical truth; but which the Church of England holds, in her formularies, in unison with the primitive Catholic Church; and, in her Articles, speaks of with a latitude so large, and with

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to be pleased with what pleaseth him. And tell him, that I do not repine, but am pleased with my want of health; and tell him, my heart is fixed on that place where true joy is only to be found; and that I long to be there, and do wait for my appointed change with hope and patience.' Having said this, he did, with so sweet a humility as seemed to exalt him, bow down to Mr. Duncon, and, with a thoughtful and contented look, say to him, 'Sir, I pray deliver this little book to my dear brother, Ferrar, and tell him he shall find in it a picture of the *many spiritual conflicts* that have passed between God and my soul, *before I could subject mine to the will of Jesus, my master, in whose service I have now found perfect freedom.*'

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"On other occasions, to his own family and a chosen friend, he would often speak to this purpose: 'I now look back upon the pleasures of my life past, and see the content I have taken in beauty, in wit, and music, and pleasant conversation, *now all* are past by like a dream, or as a shadow that returns not; and are now all become dead to me, or I to them. And I see, that as my father and generation hath done before me, so I also shall now suddenly (with Job) *make my bed also in the dark.* And I praise God I am prepared for it; and I praise him, that I am not to learn patience now I stand in such need of it; and that I have practised mortification, and endeavoured to die daily, that I might not die eternally; and my hope is, that I shall shortly leave this valley of tears, and be free from all fevers and pain; and (which will be a more happy condition) I shall be free from sin, and all the temptations and anxieties that attend it. And, this being past, I shall dwell in the New Jerusalem; dwell there with men made perfect; dwell where these eyes shall see my Master and Saviour, Jesus, and, with him, see my dear mother, and all my relations and friends. But I must die, or not come to that happy place; and this is my content, that I am going daily towards it, and that every day which I have lived hath taken a part of my appointed time from me, and that I shall live the less time for having lived this and the day past.'

"On the day of his death, he said to Mr. Woodnot: 'My dear friend, I am sorry I have nothing to present to my merciful God but sin and misery; but the first is pardoned, and, also, a few hours will now put a period to the latter; for I shall suddenly go hence, and be no more seen.' Upon which expression, Mr. Woodnot took occasion to remember him of the re-

a discretion so sound, that she is indifferently quoted in these by men of various theological persuasions.\*

Catholicity (and, of course, consistency in all essentials of doctrine) was a most distinguishing feature in the mental character and theological sentiments of Mr. Knox: and this is a feature which, in justice to my argument, cannot be left out of detailed examination, in a case where the judgment turns, with much inclination of preponderant weight, not only to the general tenour, but to the exact expression of the words which, on a particular occasion, Mr. Knox did, or did not, use. I should think that I was conducting the argument very imperfectly, if I were not to produce some evidence to this point of the question, in the words of Mr. Knox himself. It is obvious that, so far as his words will carry us, his own language ought to outweigh the testimony of any other person's as to expressions used by him; and, consequently, as to any inferences to be drawn from such expressions. In what

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edifying Layton Church, and his many acts of mercy. To which he made answer, saying, 'They be good works if they be sprinkled with the blood of Christ, and not otherwise.'

"After this discourse, he became more restless, and his soul seemed to be weary of her earthly tabernacle; and this uneasiness became so visible, that his wife, his three nieces, and Mr. Woodnot, stood constantly about his bed, beholding him with sorrow and an unwillingness to lose the sight of him whom they could not hope to see much longer. As they stood thus beholding him, his wife observed him to breathe faintly and with much trouble, and observed him to fall into sudden agony, which so surprised her, that she fell into a sudden passion, and required of him to know how he did? to which his answer was, 'that he had passed a conflict with his last enemy, and had overcome him by the merits of his Master, Jesus.'

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"At the last he said, 'Lord, forsake me not now my strength faileth me; but grant me mercy, for the merits of my Jesus: and now Lord—Lord now—receive my soul.' And, with those words, he breathed forth his divine soul."—WALTON'S *Life of George Herbert*, by Zouch, *ad finem*.

Such was the substance of that "cordial and vital apprehension of our blessed Saviour," the attainment of which would, under any circumstances, have been an unspeakable happiness to Mr. Knox. To every word that George Herbert here uttered, Mr. Knox, I am sure, would have subscribed; these views he would have deemed strictly and eminently "evangelical."—Ed.

\* Mr. Knox himself argues, from the Articles, in support of his views of the doctrine of justification by faith.

he has with his own pen recorded, there can be no misstatement as to what his words really were. In the record of words, not taken down *instantly* from the speaker's lips, we know, and are continually experiencing, that, more or less, there is always mistake. A slight deviation from the precise phrase produces a considerable variation in the import of the sentiment; and the phrase is apt to undergo some seemingly trivial (but, in effect, important) change, as it becomes unintentionally tinged with the complexional thought or feeling of the recording mind through which it passes. I make this remark with no invidious or unfair allusion. I speak of that which I conceive to be general fact, and on which every one may judge as matter of fact. I ask, is it not most difficult to relate even a recent occurrence exactly aright? And does not the difficulty incalculably increase with every year of intervening distance?

To shew the consistency of Mr. Knox, and the character of the language in which he habitually expressed his sentiments, I boldly appeal to his writings. They may be searched indifferently, at any portion of the years of which we possess any records; and they will evidence, in every stage of his religious sentiments, the same result. If ever there was unbroken consistency of opinion, it existed in the case of Mr. Knox. His views, brought together from sources of various characters, are now open, in four large volumes, giving an unreserved disclosure of even his most secret mind. During thirty-six years, that mind exhibits astonishingly little of variation. Let us hear what he says on this subject himself.\* “My mind has always adhered to the same radical principles; and changes in me have been circumstantial, or merely progressive.” “Doubtless, many thoughts have presented, and are still presenting, themselves to my mind, which once I had no idea of; but these, in, I believe, every instance, are as much the growth of former rooted principles, as multiplied branches grow from one and the same

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\* See Vol. I. Preface, page vii.



main stem. Of such an inward vegetation I am always conscious; and I equally seem to myself to perceive the novelty of the fresh shoot, and its connexion with what had been produced before." This is the language of a mind which was always growing, and always stood firm; which, in fact, grew because it shifted not its ground — because it was "rooted and grounded."

"My conduct" (that is, the specific modes in which he brought his vital principles into outward act) "varied much; but not my principles: yet, I was ever, I believe, open to conviction, and ready to have embraced whatever could have been proved true."

This, I am convinced, continued to the last. Could any view of Divine truth have been proved to him more correct than his own, he would gladly have embraced it; as rectifying error; but, in his regard of essential truths he remained immovably firm. And why? Because his views were not singular, or his own; but held in common with the primitive and universal church: there could be nothing of fluctuation in a mind that was anchored on catholic principles.

As a part of this consistency, it is even curious (but, far more, it is most satisfactory) to observe the uniformity of his desires after the Divine life, as breathed forth in prayer; which, though uttered at various remote intervals of time, was always based upon the sentiment of one unvarying principle. Look to the prayer which is contained in his Diary of August 20th, 1800; and see how the objects of those petitions are identified with those of his dying prayer. "Oh! work upon my understanding, and work upon my heart. Oh! for the sake of the Redeemer, breathe into me the spirit of prayer." Again (Sept. 5, 1800), "Oh! help me in this my extremity; open my eyes; breathe into me holy desires of a right kind; endue me, in tender mercy, with these blessed instances of the wisdom from above; and work a spiritual temper in the ground of my heart."

Can consistency of devotional sentiment be more perfect than that which is exemplified here, when this is

compared with the prayer in his distressing illness of 1829, and with that to which I have alluded — his dying prayer? “The same radical principles” were always in his mind; and, from the same abundance of the heart, his lips always uttered one and the same language. His unchanging conviction was, at all times, that “but one thing was needful,” even sanctified purity of heart; and, therefore, the unvarying substance of his prayer was, “Deepen the life of grace in me; deepen the power of true religion in my heart.” “Add solidity and depth to what thou hast prepared;” “endear Christ’s holy religion in its depth, in its fulness, and in all its tempers, to my heart’s heart;” “and, for the Lord Jesus Christ’s sake, work and deepen thine own invaluable work into me.”

Few men have been more mistaken than Mr. Knox: and the inevitable consequence was, that, when his sentiments were repeated, *that* was often misrepresented which had first been misunderstood. He himself tells us so; and what he thus says of himself, I have had confirmed to me by the unquestionably correct evidence of others. “Except I am stopped, and questioned in conversation” (it is thus he writes of himself), “I am apt to roll on, *without due attention to distinctions, which I perceive myself*; and, therefore, I think, perhaps, that *those whom I talk to will perceive them too.*” Beyond doubt, this was, in many instances, a fruitful source of erroneous judgment, as to the sentiments of Mr. Knox, in the way of misconception.

The words of Mr. S. O’Sullivan are here so much to the point, that, though I extract them from a letter which is strictly private, that gentleman will, I am sure, pardon me for doing so without his expressed permission. He first eloquently characterises the superiority of Mr. Knox’s intellectual powers; and then he points out, in the simplicity of his unconscious excellence, this very cause of that misapprehension to which he was often subjected.

“As a contemplative Christian philosopher,” says Mr. O’Sullivan, “I do not believe that Alexander Knox ever

was equalled. There was in him a native power, which took him at once, and without effort, to the level of the highest subjects, and enabled him to comprehend and to elucidate the lofty and mysterious problems of God's moral government, with as much readiness as ordinary subjects are comprehended and elucidated by ordinary men. And of this vast superiority to others, I always thought him, in a great degree, unconscious; for he would propound his noble views to individuals utterly incapable of appreciating them, with as much fulness as though they were quite on a level with himself. This, I am sure, was one of the reasons why this extraordinary man was so frequently misunderstood; and that his profound philosophy so frequently passed for splendid, but deceptive declamation."

Had Mr. Knox been more guarded, he would have been more safe. Had he thought greatly of himself, and kept others at a distance, he might have soared into the higher regions of philosophy, without bewildering weaker visions as he rose; but, in doing this, he would have lost much of the most amiable characteristics of his highly amiable nature; his genuine modesty; his perfect simplicity; that candid greatness which is above fear and above suspicion; which thinks well, even too well, of others, because conscious of no depraving weakness, no habit of detraction or misconstruction in himself. It is not unfrequently the lot of superior intellects to be foiled in some of the narrower walks of the mind's provinces by spirits inferior to themselves. The great poet has well described this:

" Oft, though wisdom wakes, suspicion sleeps  
At wisdom's gate, and to simplicity  
Resigns her charge, while goodness thinks no ill  
Where no ill seems."

Many an intellectual "Uriel" has been "beguiled;" many more unjustly depreciated. Mr. Knox suffered from his unreserved converse with the more prone spirits of earth, or the less clear-sighted spirits of heaven.



Another source of misconception was, that Mr. Knox invariably used terms in that which he believed to be their correct sense; not in that into which by abuse they had passed over into the possession of an antagonist. Of such terms, the much misused term "evangelical" was one. "He used the word evangelical in its true sense, in conversing with me," says an intimate friend of Mr. Knox: "I checked upon it, as the watchword of a party. On which he exclaimed, 'What! give up the use of a scriptural term because of their abuse of it? No, no; never will I consent to relinquish it to them.'" He never did relinquish it; he continued to use it in one unvarying and definite sense: and, in the use of that term, I firmly believe he has subjected himself to gross mistake, and to most erroneous misrepresentation.

Of the sense in which he understood that word, we have, happily, the evidence of his own written expressions.\* "To be truly *evangelical*, is to FEEL that the Gospel is the POWER of God unto salvation; and, from that FEELING, to speak so as to make others FEEL their wants, and hopefully to SEEK the true supply. This, and not DOCTRINE (to turn from Blair to others that claim that title), is evangelical preaching."

"The more I read, and think, and look around me, my conviction increases that the oversight of the supreme moral purpose of the Gospel is the dominant error of the present day; and that the clouds which envelope the religious world at this time, and which, it may be feared, are producing deep and extensive delusion, can only be dispelled by ascertaining the real import of evangelical doctrine. I mean, by its being acknowledged and *felt*, that the supreme design of the Gospel is to teach us effectually to 'deny ungodliness and worldly desires, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;' and that (whatever other results were provided

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\* Letter to the Rev. T. Stedman, Feb. 13, 1804; Vol. IV. p. 137. In making this, and other quotations, I have caused the words to be printed as they are expressed in the MS. letters, by single or double lines scored underneath.

for by our Lord's death) this *moral* result is the one great end asserted by St. Paul : *that* is, not barely the *literal*, but the *greatly heightened* realisation of the propounded purpose, 'He gave himself for us, to redeem us from *all* iniquity, and purify to Himself a peculiar people, *zealous of good works*.' I would ask, is there, in the evangelical volume, a more direct, comprehensive, definitive statement of *that* object of our blessed Saviour's humiliation and death, which was supremely contemplated in the whole stupendous procedure?"

Such was Mr. Knox's sense of the term "evangelical;" and such his sense of the effectual results of evangelical religion. The term expressed to him the power of God unto salvation; and the result of that power (or of the Gospel of Christ, evangelically applied and received), was the blessedness which springs from being purified from all evil, and put into actual possession of all, even of heavenly good; the being brought "from the power of Satan unto God;" and being "able to do all things through Christ who strengtheneth."

How deep a value Mr. Knox set on such true evangelical religion as this (not on mere doctrine, nor on doctrine any further than as it is made effectual to the production of this), appears in a letter of Sept. 11, 1829, part of which I have already quoted. It at once expresses his views, and touchingly exhibits his deeply practical evangelical humility. "Pray to God for relief to me. I do not mean, absolutely and positively, for bodily relief; but for such communications of supporting grace, as may enable me to submit, without a murmur, to the will (I should rather say the wisdom and goodness) of God. If He would deepen the *sense* of religion in me; if he would bless me with more of the spirit of prayer; with more of the vital knowledge of the only true God, and of Jesus Christ whom he has sent; with felt and habitual access of the heart to the Father and to the Son; with the blessed power of taking refuge in God from all troubles, and of looking beyond the present light affliction, which is but for a moment, to a far more exceeding and eternal

weight of glory ; I trust I should be willing to leave every thing else to his unerring disposal."

"It would be a deep consolation, nay, a rich compensation, to me, if I could hope that all this was intended to deepen true religion in my heart, and to bring me into true and substantial possession of the life of God in the soul ; and, I ought to add, into a spiritual and experimental knowledge of the Holy Scriptures. I have long felt my deficiency in that respect."

This is the true key to the understanding of Mr. Knox's feelings in the interview which Mr. Kelly has described. This note of mourning his soul always struck when bowed down under a sense of his limited portion of the life after which he panted ; and of which his ardent imagination caught a true but faintly reflected gleam. The cry of his heart to God (and sometimes the confiding expression of his complaint to his friends) was (not "I begin to suspect that my views," but), "I have long known, and deeply do I feel, that my heart and mind are not sufficiently evangelical."

Of the deep deficiency of this religion of the heart (deep, when compared with the almost seraphic heights into which the fervours of his intellectual imagination soared), no man could be more sensible than Mr. Knox : no one could more feelingly lament this ; it was, in fact, his only ground or theme of lamentation. More consolatory views on this subject he would most gladly have possessed. He sought them diligently in the way of prayer and supplication, and vigilant self-denial, and cautious separation from every thing that, to his apprehension, bore the most remote appearance of outward or inward sin. He would willingly have purchased them at the expense of any thing but the truth. At this cost, the purchase could not be made ; his heart could not appropriate that which his mind told him was visionary. He could almost have envied (if of envy he had been capable) the mental construction of those who conscientiously held views of the Gospel truths that differed widely from his own ; and who, yet, found in those views a



satisfactory delight, which he more feebly enjoyed, though most ardently did he long after it. Of these persons (as in reference to their spirituality, and to the cheering confidence with which they personally embraced their interest in the Divine favour), Mr. Knox has been known to speak in such terms as to make him subsequently doubt whether he had not raised a false impression by an avowal of his regard thus far ; and to cause him (not to retract, but) unequivocally to explain, what his less qualified language might seem to have uttered. Between their lives and their doctrines he made the broadest distinction : their hopes, he was clearly satisfied, were far surer than their alleged ground of hope. He was convinced, that Christ was vitally in their hearts, though he unhesitatingly asserted, that the truth, as it is in Christ, was in their minds most partially, and with gross admixture. He rejoiced to think, that the soundness of their moral constitution enabled them to thrive on food which, he believed, had not the full strength of life in it ; that God, who was their God, could make up to them the defects of those supplies, of which circumstances, unconnected with any perversion of will, had cut them short. He felt, indeed, that, in their captivity, they had but " pulse to eat, and water to drink ;" but he saw, that, in numerous instances, " their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh, than " those of many of " the children that did eat the portion of the king's meat." He saw this ; and he candidly avowed it. He avowed it, at once in depreciation of himself, and to the acknowledgment of their comparative superiority in this particular. But, in such avowal, he never lost sight of his distinctions : he confounded not a real effect with a supposed cause. He did not attribute to doctrinal influences that which his mind had traced solely to the operation of God's " power unto salvation " working its blessed effects upon the ground of an honest and good (a spiritually regenerated) " heart." Here, again, Mr. Knox may have been misconceived in his speech ; but, here again, in the corrected language of his written thoughts, he has (fortunately, I

must think) guarded against the inferences of such misconception. "I meant no more by what I said of the Evangelicals, as they are called, than that they have been the chief instruments of maintaining *experimental religion* in the reformed churches: and, *however* this may have been done, I must think it an invaluable blessing. I did not mean to speak *particularly* of those who are *now* active; but of the entire *genus*. And I did not mean that I *thought* otherwise of them than I did when you and I were last talking on the subject: but that my own increased exigencies had made me more alive to the value of that *power of religion, &c.*,"\* (as quoted at page lxii).

I cannot picture to my mind any thing more honest and candid, more impartial and discriminating, more humble and charitable, than this; and, at the same time, more consistent with his own views of doctrinal truth, and more harmoniously in unison with that exalted estimation in which Mr. Knox invariably regarded the supereminent power of grace as "blessing the pure in heart." He ever delighted to proclaim, that to "see God" was their peculiar and divinely promised felicity.

That, substantially, his hope was as good as theirs,—that, in fact, it was fundamentally the same as theirs,—he confidently knew; and habitually he derived sustaining support from this. But his hope differed in its modification from theirs. His trust reposed on Christ, as an internal Saviour from sin; and so, from all the associated and consequent misery of sin. Nor personally did he rely on that which Christ had done for himself (exclusively of what he had done for all mankind), further than as he had experience of what the power of Christ's grace was doing in himself, as one of God's spiritually saved and sanctified children. For the inestimable benefit of salvability, effected by universal redemption, he was deeply thankful, and desirous ever to make due, and so far as he was able, adequate returns of praise. For the far mightier work wrought in him, by calling him in this

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\* Letter, August 5, 1828. Vol. IV. p. 501.

world out of the mass of unregenerate nature, and placing him in a state of salvation, he was proportionately impressed with deeper emotions of gratitude. But, his longing desire being to be “ saved to the uttermost,” and believing, that to “ dwell in God’s tabernacle ” (still more, to “ rest upon his holy hill ”) an uncorrupt life was the preliminary, or concomitant, and that “ every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as He is pure ;”—believing this, he watched, with eager solicitude, the variations of his inward life; and trembled, not without some portion of a faithlessness which he condemned, so often as he felt any passing cloud of nature interpose between the fruit of his maturing grace, and the fuller lustre which, at other times, beamed on him from the Sun of Righteousness. These solicitudes he deemed no derogation from the honour of his Saviour, from the worth of his acts, or the omnipotence of their effectiveness. Nor did they shake his trust in that arm which he embraced as his strength; though they made him at every step aware, and in many movements, painfully sensible, of his own weakness. He deemed, that he was most truly honouring God, in thinking of the work of his grace, exactly as God’s word has declared it to be wrought, even though he seemed to defer the honour due to that grace, receiving it in part now, and humbly co-operating with it, that he might, at length, receive it in its fulness. He could not honour Christ by ascribing to him any work which he did not believe him to have performed; but he truly honoured him with the variously proportioned honours which he believed to be severally due to the various degrees and effects of his Divine operation. He trusted in him for “ pardon and peace;” but the pardon in which he trusted, was the ultimate “ deliverance from all his sins;” and the peace which he desired, was, that “ being cleansed from all his sins, he might serve God with a quiet mind, through Jesus Christ his Lord,” as well as his Saviour. Till this was effected, his flesh rested in hope,—and in something more than mere hope,—in the confidence of a good trust: but he dared not to triumph



till the victory should be wholly won ; nor did he take to himself the crown, upon the simple ground that Christ had already won for him the first fruits of ultimate victory. " I humbly trust " (says he, when, within a few months of his death,\* he writes in the persuasion that he is " not far from the unseen world ") " I humbly trust that God will not impute to me various defects, and, I fear, neglects, of duty, with which I charge myself through life ; and that he will, in every respect, be merciful to me, for the sake of Jesus Christ. For to *him*, I humbly hope, I am as sincerely disposed to do honour, as if I were of the same opinion with those who think themselves alone truly evangelical."

Mr. Knox's views of the present power of Christianity were very high ; and his demand, within himself, for the *evidence* of that power, as present with him, was proportionably raised : nor could he, unless this evidence were substantially possessed, enjoy (what, on lower calculations, may be maintained) a sense of conscientious repose, or a perception of some feeling that approaches to satisfactory happiness. Let us hear how high he carries his estimate of that which Christianity can perform ; and of that which it will bring along with itself of conscientious distrust, to prepare the mind in which it dwells for the purely heavenly delights which it offers. " Christianity† implies a *fixed friendship*, a *blessed familiarity*, with the only true God, and Him whom He hath sent. It implies an actual experience of such influences and attractions, as worldly minds have no idea of ; and which spiritual minds know to be of a nature distinct from every thing they could do for themselves. And, though they are not often disappointed in their cordial endeavours to obtain some degree, at least, of these Divine drawings, yet still they fail sufficiently to assure them that there are laws in the case which operate independently of the mere will of man. And that, in the strictest sense, they ' are not sufficient,

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\* Letter of December 23, 1830. Vol. IV. p. 616.

† Letter of February 21, 1807. Vol. IV. p. 218.

of themselves, even to think as of themselves :’ but that ‘ their sufficiency is of God.’

“ It strikes me, that, when these things are not apprehended, there is some want of *tenderness of conscience*. There may be the nicest sense of what we owe to our fellow men ; and yet there may not be a due impression of that profound saying, ‘ Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.’ There is a spiritual discernment of God, which shews depths of subtle evil, not before discovered ; and which would not be attended to, nor regarded as evil at all, if we did not feel a certain intercourse with God to be essential to our happiness ; with which intercourse these evils are felt to be incompatible. When, then, these deep and subtle evils are detected, our own inability to expel, or overcome them, will be also manifest. This will lead to earnest prayer for deliverance from them ; which deliverance, again, we naturally look for through a deeper and more influential sense of Divine things. And, being deeply interested, and closely attentive, when such a sense grows, and in proportion as it grows, in us, we mark the difference ; and feel, with delightful satisfaction, that what we cannot do for ourselves, God does for us ; that imploring his aid is not a fruitless resource. Thus ‘ tribulation’ (of a spiritual as well as temporal kind) ‘ worketh patience ; and patience, *experience* ; and *experience, hope.*’ ”

It appears, from another of his letters, that this matter of *contrast* rated high, in Mr. Knox’s estimate, among the substantial blessings of sound spiritual religion. He even dwelt upon the expediency (I had almost said the necessity) of a certain species of religious anxiety, not merely as heightening the pleasurable sensations of returning confidence, but as verifying the solid character of that confidence when it should return. Five months\* before his death, he writes thus to one of his most confidential correspondents. “ I hope my constitutional malady will be overruled for my good. I am

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\* Letter of Jan. 18, 1831. Vol. IV. p. 623.

suffering not a little from it just at this time. But I am sensible that it is, after all, a light affliction in comparison with those that are suffered by others ; and I hope that, if God is pleased to make it the means of deepening religion in me, instead of repining, I shall be thankful.

“ The account you give me in the latter part of your note is distressing ; and, especially in the latter instance, I cannot but think that well-disposed persons often suffer in their religious interests, from not having sufficiently *identified the habitual frame of the heart and mind* with RELIGION. The considering this great object as an extrinsic blessing in itself, taking place, in some sort, in our circumstances, rather than in our moral nature, seems to me likely to abate the anxiety for victory over wrong desires and passions. I do not mean, that such a desire is not sincerely felt ; but only, that it is not felt in that way of concentrated and absolute solicitude, without which such an object will not be accomplished. I suspect this to be a serious defect in modern divinity ; and though the person referred to has, I am sure, entertained no gross error, yet whether he has had such *horrifying* views of unsubdued tempers, as the deep religion of the heart requires, may be, perhaps, a matter of doubt.”

We are left, I think, in no uncertainty as to the character of those solitudes, which, combining with the pressure of constitutional disease, gave to Mr. Knox occasionally the appearance of religious despondency in the eye of a casual visitor ; or which, when in the confidence of unreserved communication he descanted on them, misled the judgment even of a friend. There are delicacies of highly sensitive natures, into which minds more coarsely constituted cannot enter ; scruples of the exquisitely refined conscience, which the sincerity of homelier casuists cannot comprehend. Something of this nature, as existing in his own instance, Mr. Knox has expressly mentioned ; but, without his naming it, an attentive reader would detect it. The desire of his heart was, that religion should be deepened in him. This was the constant end of his labour of self-inspection and self-govern-



ment; this was the one paramount object of his reiterated petitions before the throne of mercy and grace. But “the deep religion of the heart requires,” in his judgment, “*horrifying* views of unsubdued tempers.” A passing thought; the first rise of a ruffled feeling; any thing opposed to the pure, and meek, and calm, and happy spirit of Christianity, would be sufficient to cause, in such a conscience, an agitated start of terror, or a feeble sinking of depression. The “frame of the mind and heart” was, in him, “identified with religion;” and to lose, even for a moment, that habitual frame, was, for the moment, to lose his religion,—a blessing which he valued “more than the fee-simple of the created universe.” Could he lose it, even thus temporarily, without the sense of apprehension that, when he regained it, it might return to him impaired?

It is not wise, it is not charitable, to pronounce upon the reasonableness of what are called the religious fears of others. We know not the peculiarities of the constitutional temperament, which God has, in the wisdom of his goodness, been pleased to mix up with the religious principle in them. “Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth.” “The heart knoweth its own bitterness;” and, in the very depths of such bitterness as is connected with the love of God and his holiness, the heart has also its unknown visitations of a Comforter;—“a stranger intermeddleth not with its joy.”

“The character of Mr. Knox’s apprehensive anxieties was enhanced by the views which he took of the littleness of man’s own doings, in the way of true religion; by his deep conviction that religion was essentially the love of God, wrought in man’s heart by the specific agency of the Divine Spirit. When he sank, therefore, (that is, when the purity or fervour of his religious habit abated), he was deeply conscious that, out of this depression, he could not raise *himself*. Prayer was his only refuge; and the re-exerted power of God his only confidence. But, in the feebleness of an imperfect condition, he waited

for the arm of Heaven to be stretched out in his favour ; never, indeed, without a supporting trust, and never with an impatient murmur ; but often, it may be believed, with mournful desire, and (as he himself has beautifully expressed it) with “ regretful piety.” How he thought on this subject, let his own words speak : “ My fixed persuasion, after years of solicitous consideration, is this : We never can soften this [religious] apprehension into religious hope, merely by being more vigilant over our actions, or becoming more actively beneficent. These are indispensable, as adjuncts ; but they will not heal a wounded spirit, or lead alone to a steady peace of mind. Indeed, however they may tell in a man’s favour, in the view of the merciful and indulgent Father of our spirits, I believe they have no DIRECT efficacy whatever to settle the mind in comfort. *Religion*, strictly so called — and, to us, *the religion of the Gospel* — will alone be adequate for this *inward* effect. By *religion*, I mean a steady choice and affectionate adherence to *God*, as the paramount object of our hearts ; and, by the religion of the Gospel, I mean the same great end pursued under the more familiarising, yet more elevated, views, and with adequate knowledge of, and cordial relish for, those multiplied and invaluable aids, which the grand and gracious system of ‘ God manifest in the flesh ’ implies. ‘ Holy desires ’ have direct and immediate reference to the Father of Spirits ; and are the first motions of the true and real life of our souls. In having *these*, therefore, I do consider you, as compared with others, singularly happy. And it is in the growth of these that both your safety and comfort will consist. These are religion in its bud ; and in proportion as these develope themselves and become the ruling principle in the mind, will all right and happy feelings and habits increase and multiply.”\*

So he wrote in 1804 : mark the consistency of sentiment with which he expressed himself in 1830. Writing in that year to a friend, on Christmas day, the anniversary

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\* Letter, Feb. 21, 1804. Vol. IV. p. 139.

of that friend's birth, it is thus that he dwells at once on the blessed character of "holy desires," and on the utter inefficacy of all human endeavour, when separate from the mighty grace of God. "I am confident it is the chief desire of your heart, that every successive birthday should find you in increased fitness for that which is the truest of all birthdays to the divinely enfranchised spirit. But how little, in this great respect, can we do for ourselves! I feel, by daily experience, that it is God himself who must work in us both to will and to do. But the encouragement is infallible; — 'Ask, and ye shall receive.' May this happiness be realised in its fulness in you, my inexpressibly valued friend; in our dearest —; and in myself. And to this end, may the Holy Spirit initiate us into the great mystery of godliness, that we may enjoy all the influences, and partake of all the consolations, which have been provided for us in the wonderful vouchsafement which is this day commemorated."

Had Mr. Knox been one of those who content themselves with what he calls, "the cold, low, unenergetic notion of Christianity,"\* his mind might possibly have been easier; but it may be more than doubted whether his "treasure" would have been equally safe: and he valued not the peace of slothful repose, if it were to impair, in the smallest degree, the safety of a more vigilant guardianship. Mr. Knox's notions of Christianity, as a state into which man is divinely admitted, were, at his lowest estimate, high; and, in his most exalted regard, he carried it beyond the line which "the cold, low, and unenergetic" believer would allow to be rationality. "Freedom (though not security) from presumptuous sins, I take to be essential, at the lowest, to a state of grace. The will is averted from all moral evil; all the deliberate volitions are pure and holy; wrong desires and passions are felt as diseases to be habitually guarded against, and, as far as possible, to be wholly suppressed. All those acts, therefore, which imply predominant depravity, are at an end."† This alone, which Mr. Knox calls "essential at

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\* Vol. I. p. 5.

† Vol. I. p. 2.



the lowest," would, I fear, by many be deemed an arduous height of Christian excellence. And, if they did not despair of attaining to it, but, on the contrary, made it their aim, they would be apt, I think, to rest, in much of complacency (perhaps in something of self-satisfaction), when, as the result of many a painful effort, they had climbed thus high. Here, upon their principles, these low calculators ought to find repose; but here, a Christian, who felt with Mr. Knox, would never think of repose, or dream of setting up his rest. He could not "count himself to have apprehended," on this beginning step of the scale, "that, for which also" he had been "apprehended of Christ Jesus." "Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before" (counting nothing of any level of grace already attained to, but as a step to further progress, in the faithful prospect of all that was yet attainable), "this one thing" *he* would do, in whose heart true religion predominated, who was fixed in the "steady choice of and affectionate adherence to God," he would "press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." He would never relax his efforts, till all that in this world can be laid hold on was substantially in his possession; until he were (so far as mortality would allow) under such influences of the grace of "God manifest in the flesh," as made him, humanly, perfect.

But, when this point is gained, there is still, on Mr. Knox's principles, no exemption from feelings that are, partially and transiently, at variance with the serenity of imperturbable repose. "All those which imply predominant depravity, are, indeed, at an end; but in matters which belong to weakness rather than depravity, the language" of the aspiring soul "may still be that of David, 'Who can tell how oft he offendeth? Oh, cleanse thou me from my secret faults!' Yea, and will be still to a certain extent: he who has conquered one set of faults, finding forthwith, by means of his increased moral sensibility, a new set of still more subtle faults to be guarded against and resisted."

Mr. Knox's notions of the state of the perfect Christian went no higher than this. He allowed of no such perfection as was exempt from conflict; and, though he held that "a state of uniform victory was here attainable," yet victory implies warfare: and in every act of warfare there must be diminution of the joys of spirituality, an interruption even of its peace. "I hold no *perfection* that excludes *weakness*: in fact, I mean by that term, not a *mind* raised above *temptation*, but a *heart* freed from dividedness and deceitfulness; so that, though there may be wandering in abundance from the point in hand, there is no wandering of heart from God; no other settled idea of happiness or comfort is admitted into the mind; St. John's direction is OBEYED, '*Little children, keep yourselves from idols.*' In a word, I believe only in a *perfection of principle*: but every possible degree of goodness here has a still higher degree above it; so, no *immutable habit* in this world."\*

At the moment when Mr. Knox wrote thus, he judged himself to be but very low on the ascending scale of perfection; and the higher he rose, the more clearly ("by means of his increased moral sensibility) did he discern" a "new set of still more subtle faults, to be guarded against and resisted." He stood, more and more, in a posture of defence and of self-diffidence unto the end.

Yet was he not miserable, under either this high notion of Christian privileges, or his low estimate of himself, and of the use which he habitually made of grace. "I am but weak in all good qualities" (he could say)—"a very slight nervous derangement shewing me how easily *I* might be disturbed. I have good confidence, however, that I shall be both guided and supported." In the hottest assault, he felt that, though "persecuted," he was "not forsaken:" his "treasure," indeed, was "in an earthen vessel," and in one of most feeble texture; yet his comfort consisted in the confident proof that therein *was* "treasure." And he complained not that the light within him† as yet burned dim, knowing that a day was at hand when it

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\* Letter, Dec. 14, 1807. Vol. IV. p. 228.    † Judges, vii. 16, 20.

should break out ; and, being well content to endure the present obscurity, " that the excellency of the power may be of God, not of us." Moreover, it was his belief that what he was thus called to feel, was a very common lot of spiritual and physical suffering ; and he thought that, with its trials, it had even its present advantages. " I think it probable, that few persons of religious sincerity and constitutional sensibility, are wholly exempt from them " (from trials such as these). " One great consolation undoubtedly is, that, after all, they are but passing clouds ; and, I am inclined to think, may be serving us, on the whole of the account, much more than we are always aware of. I doubt whether we do not learn more of the value of religious affections ; of being, as St. Paul expresses it, ' rooted and grounded in love,' than we could conceive in a course of uninterrupted mental ease. And, by means of those inward obscurations, we may be not a little preserved from the far greater calamity of well-founded self-accusation. I, therefore, on the whole, am *willing* that the wise and good God should take his own way with me ; trusting that he ' will make all things work together for my good.' " \*

In every such trial, whatever he was called to endure, Mr. Knox's support was drawn from one source ; however his feelings might vary, his reflections were uniform ; let him suffer, mentally or corporeally, never so much, " still the basis of consolation remains the same, that ' whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth.' " †

But, in the midst of much comparative weakness (and under feelings of increased sensibility, which, at times, painfully deepened the shade of the comparison), Mr. Knox possessed no inconsiderable portion of positive and conscious strength. We find him, now and then, saying so ; though always coupling his comforts with fear, and expressing his boast in the language of true humility. " I want you " (he writes ‡ to a much-valued correspond-

\* Letter, May 12, 1830. Vol. IV. p. 592.

† Letter, August 16, 1830. Vol. IV. p. 597.

‡ Letter, October 30, 1804. Vol. IV. p. 188.



ent) “ to be very strong and very firm with the world. Poor creature as I am, I trust I have a *little* of this; and the comfort I feel in a steady, made-up, independent mind, makes me wish more and more of it to myself and you. It is neither more nor less than *good sense and sound principle in combination, resting on their own truest and most natural*, indeed, their only *real* basis, that eternal, immutable law of rectitude; ‘ whose seat is the bosom of God; whose voice, the harmony of the world.’ He, whose mind is thus established, has habitual, filial access to the living source of the universe, the parent of life and peace. ‘ If our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God.’ And to be rooted and grounded in this holy habit and privilege is, surely, a heaven upon earth.

“ If our way to this were by a ladder, to be ascended step by step as our own efforts would enable us, our view of it would, I think, be but like that of Moses from Mount Nebo. But St. Paul tells us, that salvation ‘ is of faith, that it may be of grace :’ meaning, that it does not depend upon a slow series of efforts, but upon an inward temper, which, when possessed, does the business at once; and which temper God is ready to work in all who only fix their hearts upon it. We think, how shall we be able to do such or such a thing; to bear such a trial; to keep a spiritual mind in such circumstances; to think of so many things without distraction? Why, of ourselves we never could; the least of those difficulties would upset us for ever. But God can, by a little change in the frame of our minds, make all these things very easy. A deeper sense of himself, of the evil of sin, of the misery of inward bondage to corruption, of the infinite value of his favour, and of a life of holy intercourse with him, is that which he can soon give; and, when he gives it, the crooked paths become straight, and rough ways plain. This central feeling of God and Divine things is what the New Testament calls faith. ‘ By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, *as seeing him that is invisible.*’ And salvation (that is, all well-

being of soul here and hereafter) is evidently of this faith : for this faith produces love of what it so discovers ; and the love of God is itself salvation. But it is of faith, that it may be of grace ; that is, that it may be as gratuitous, as extensively communicated, and as promptly obtained, as, in the nature of things, is possible. For, when salvation is made to grow out of one parent grace, all that remains for us is to seek daily and hourly that grace of faith, from him who has said, ' Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.'

" In thus speaking, I am not talking at random : I have had every weakness and every temptation to struggle with which does not depend upon peculiar circumstances. And here lay my advantage,—that I felt those evils were not to be overcome piecemeal (I mean, one by one, and by necessarily slow degrees) ; but, that a deepened feeling of heart religion, an increase of that ' faith' which is ' the substantiation of things hoped for,' and ' the evidence of things not seen,' would raise me above them all, at once. Every uneasy feeling, therefore, made me, and still makes me, turn inward to God in the closet of my heart, to entreat him to deepen the sense of himself ; to shew me more than ever the evil of sin, so as to increase my hatred of it ; the vanity of the world, so as to raise me quite above it ; and the value and felicity of that loving-knowledge of himself, and of Him whom He hath sent, so that my heart might ever say, ' Whom have I in heaven but thee?' This deepening of Divine faith in the heart, I saw was *every thing* ; and, therefore, for this inward and spiritual root and principle I have looked above all ; knowing that God alone could work it in me, and that he had, in the covenant of grace, engaged to do it. I often thought, how shall I manage such a difficulty ? or go on steadily in such a course ? But I reflected, where will be the difficulty, if God only alters the disposition ? Let me not be solicitous what I am to do in such or such a case, or about the consequences which may arise, suppose conscience lead me to this or that : let me leave all that to God, asking only

wisdom to see, and strength to do, what is right; and leaving both particulars and consequences to Him, whose touching of the heart can, at once, put all in tune, and make all intricacies and embarrassments disappear.

“Such have been my feelings (often painfully and doubtingly) for years. But, I trust, I now find I was right in my course; since, certainly, that very kind of ease which I once thought it delightful to fancy, but could not rationally hope that I should ever attain, has been wonderfully given to me. And, now, I sometimes wonder that such astonishing mercy should have fallen to the lot of such a worm as I. I see clearly it is the very mercy of the Gospel; the blessing which the Eternal Word took our flesh to procure for us, and convey to us. I see it harmonise with every thing desirable in nature, every thing important and eventful in Providence, and every faculty and feeling (active and passive, intellectual, fanciful, or affectionate) in the human mind. And, above all, I see the whole explanation and developement of it in the Scriptures; and, wonderful to think! I trust I feel the efficacy of it every hour in my heart. Thus, the whole outward scheme of things appears to me to be that to Christianity which the body is to the soul or spirit of the individual. To each person it is, when given to him from on high, as a soul within his soul, overcoming the carnal life, and producing a Divine and spiritual principle, which is not only life, but peace: and, in a grander way, it is working inwardly and invisibly in the great social mass of mankind,—all providential action being made subservient to it,—until, by this mighty, but unobserved, working, the whole shall be leavened. To be within such a Divine scheme, and to make a humble part of it, is the chief end, the consummate glory, the only real life, of man.”

It is very observable, that whatever of mental strength or comfort Mr. Knóx possessed or enjoyed, he classed it all under the head, not of mere doctrinal views, but of inward personal experience. He cordially, indeed, ac-



knowledge of every scriptural doctrine; and to the revelation of such truths in Holy Scripture he invariably traced the solid character of the comfort in which he rested, or the strength which he enjoyed. The truths of Scripture were his security for "coming boldly," in every instance of felt necessity, "unto the throne of grace, that" he might "obtain mercy, and grace to help in time of need." But, beyond this, the revelation of doctrinal truth did not embolden him. It was on ground like this, that, in common with other revealed truths, he received the great doctrine of the Christian atonement. He regarded it as the sure confidence of the reconciliation of man with God, through the death and passion of Jesus Christ. But his assurance, that reconciliation for sinners had been thus effected, was precious in his estimate, only on these considerations,—first, that through the sacrifice of Christ, every thing had been effected, which, in the system of the Divine economy, was requisite to make Divine mercy rightly compatible with Divine justice; and, secondly, that all of grace which Christ had thus procured, was so modified as to be capable of flowing with healing "virtue" into all hearts and minds; into the involuntary participant of original sin, and into the faithful penitent who, conscious of the error of his former ways, had, at length, forsaking his own wickedness, devotedly turned to God. Such was Mr. Knox's doctrinal view of this great fact: but the merely doctrinal view afforded him a merely preliminary comfort; it was from the experimental sense of the fact that he drew his present consolation. The knowledge of the doctrine alone could have given little better than a future hope. This experimental view he deemed at once the truest and safest, the best and happiest. The other, to those who could conscientiously embrace it, was no doubt the easiest: but Mr. Knox was not one of those who, in the vital matter of salvation, make count of ease. Nothing was satisfactory to his heart's feelings, which was not, to his mind's conviction, solidly secure. I am not here saying what I

suppose to have been the case. I found my remarks upon his own recorded opinion. He writes thus,\* in a letter to the same correspondent, to whom the letter from which I last extracted is addressed. "This night we had a long talk on this subject,—is it the thinking on the atonement or death of Christ, or is it the actual experience of the saving power of Christ, by which our hearts are to be excited to love and gratitude? I, of course, allowed the Divine efficacy of our Saviour's atonement; but could not conceive how the distinct and continual adverting to this, was either profitable or natural. I said, if we lived with a friend, who had once saved us from drowning, and who still protected and supported us, it would be the present, every day kindnesses, rather than the one great kindness, which would feed the flame of love. And I could not but think, that, in like manner, if we now could say with David, 'The Lord is my shepherd,' &c., it would be our present intercourse with him, rather than any general blessing, however great, conferred formerly, which would be the source of our love.

"I may be wrong; my suspicion, however, is, that the *feeling* system which I thought our friend had adopted, has, somehow or other, faded from his mind: and that he has adopted a *thinking* system instead of it. I mean, that in a way of his own, he has, like many others, become inclined to put *views* in the place of actual *experience*; finding it easier to *look at* what was done by our Saviour on the cross, than to *look for* such inward effects of that great transaction as would imply *realization* rather than *recollection*.

"Outward sin, the worthy man has long since cast from him: and inward sin, I dare say, he hates, and strives against, and hopes more and more to conquer. But there is an inward hungering and thirsting after righteousness, a vivid tenderness of conscience, and an habitual sense of Divine and eternal things, which lead the mind to constant self-attention, to unremitting watchfulness,

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\* Letter, August 15, 1806. Vol. IV. page 214.

and to hourly prayer; and which, though apparently difficult, and, in the view of many, unattainable, I conceive to be the only true state of ease and liberty."

These words explain sufficiently (if, in the breast of any who are conversant with the results of combined moral and physical sensibilities, any doubt can exist) what was the cause of Mr. Knox's occasional sinkings, or of the habitual closeness of his conscientious self-inspection, and his tendency, in many instances, to "write bitter things against himself." His moral and spiritual demands were high; his notions of attainable Christian perfection were of the most exalted kind; realization was every thing in his regard; mere doctrinal opinion, at the best, he esteemed superficial, and utterly unsatisfactory. Could such a mind be without its cravings, its voids and aching, its longings and its mournings? But could it also be without the consciousness of possessing something, that, however scanty in measure, was, in its nature, solid and satisfactory; something that would endure; something that would increase; something which in the end would prove to be no visionary dream; and that, meantime, was felt to be the "sober certainty of waking bliss;" of a bliss that would, for ever, be in kind the same, though perfect in its degree then only when the mental sight, which here was painfully straining its feeble nerve, should strengthen in the fulness of that light which would open on it in the state of glorified immortality.

I take this to be the condition of most who truly aspire after an enjoyment, which here they cannot fully possess; the strong desire of which must involve a sense of painful uneasiness. Yet is this very uneasiness blessed to those who endure it in faith; in the conviction, that, in the end, it shall be removed; and that, in the time of suffering, it is the preliminary and preparation for the most entire blessedness. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness" (yea even with the painful sense of some craving void here); "Blessed are they that mourn:" the one class shall be "filled," the other "comforted." But no such blessedness is the promised portion



of those who dream away existence in the security of mere doctrinal views; the blessedness which they so possess is visionary, and it must fade. If, in addition to such views, they were not in possession also of that heart-religion, with which those views are often connected (but *which* the views themselves *are* not), it would be with them "even as when a hungry man dreameth, and behold he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty: or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and behold he drinketh; but he awaketh, and behold he is faint, and his soul hath appetite." Mr. Knox was no such dreamer; it was not on notional religion that his soul sustained itself: he sought "the substance of things hoped for." He ate "the living bread which came down from heaven;" he drank of "the living water" which Christ gives; of that "water of life proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb." His "soul" was truly "athirst for God;" and, in the unquenchable desire for full fruition, his cry would at times be, "When shall I come to appear in the presence of God?" In his strong hunger, it may be that, in due season, his God "would feed him with the bread of tears." But it was in such hunger and such thirst that his spirit was divinely renewed. By the food so eaten he was nourished and sustained; and though "the journey" of this life "was too great for him," yet, through every vicissitude of the wilderness, in joy and in sorrow, "forty days and forty nights" "in the strength of that meat" he finished his pilgrimage, until, at length, his toil and sorrow ended, he came "unto Horeb, the Mount of God."

Now, I put it to any man of clear discernment, and of candid judgment, to any one who is conversant with the workings of human nature, above all, with the settledness of the spiritual understanding when established in the power of grace, Is it possible that one who had been matured in principles and sentiments such as those which I have been exhibiting, could, in a moment, turn round; and, abandoning the very things he had most cleaved to, the convictions he had avowed most frequently, those to which he had adhered invariably through evil and good

report, during the long continuance of a most blameless and holy life ; could such a man, of these declared modes of thinking (avowing them, too, be it observed, as I have proved in evidence, up to within a few weeks, and days, of his death ; yea, up to the very last day of his mortal being) ; could he, by any unheard-of mode of self-deception (is it within the bounds of moral probabilities that he could), declare that doctrinal " views " were what he stood more in need of ; and especially that he was painfully conscious of deficiency in what his friend, Mr. Kelly, would deem evangelical doctrinal views ? To believe this, is to set testimony above experience ; the testimony of a moment above the experience of a long life. It is to give credit to the recollections of a mind which, at the moment of conversing, might have been radically misconceiving, as we have proof that others misconceived. It is to put faith in the record of words, perhaps incorrectly remembered, certainly not at the time reduced to writing, or even orally communicated " to *any* human being " till after (we *know* not how long after) Mr. Knox's death. To believe thus, is to believe in the existence of a fact which would contradict every fact of Mr. Knox's life that we are acquainted with. And *that*, on the authority of a narrative, which, on the easiest of suppositions, can be otherwise well reconciled with the narrator's indisputable character for integrity of purpose, for intentional truth.

If we receive the facts of this narrative, see into what such reception leads us : see the contradictions which it involves, and the cloud which it brings over the memory of Mr. Knox.

Mr. Knox is not, indeed, charged with being intellectually weak ; nor is it said, or insinuated, that any imputation of moral pravity could, in the slightest degree, be brought against him. The fact was notoriously otherwise in both respects ; and, among the numbers who admired and loved Mr. Knox, there are, probably, few who would be more shocked than Mr. Kelly at the idea of any such charge, in either respect. Yet, in what has been reported, both such charges are virtually involved.

He must be mentally weak, who, in a moment of sensitive apprehension, can renounce the settled convictions of an understanding scripturally established from the tenderness of a religious infancy, up to the confirmed Christianity of his seventy-third year. And the moral sensibilities must be utterly blunted of one who could die with a tacit deceit in his breast, conscious of a change which forced him to reveal his depressing convictions to one friend, yet concealing it from others, still nearer and more dear; leaving them under the delusion that he still was what he was not, and committing to their hands the trust of publishing to the world, as his, opinions which (whatever was their intrinsic truth and worth) were, thenceforth, actually disclaimed by him as his sentiments. Could this be Mr. Knox; or will his friend, on a deliberate reconsideration, attribute this to Mr. Knox? If Mr. Kelly still remains firm in the belief that he has construed and reported Mr. Knox's words aright, I do not see how he can escape the pain of knowing that his friend was, in his last days, miserably deficient at the least in mental strength, and in moral honesty and courage.

But "the nearer prospect of death and eternity" overcame him; and "his former principles were not able to sustain him," when he looked closely into those things that awaited him beyond the grave. His principles, however, had been tried by this prospect before;\* and, under that trial, they had been found firm. They were, indeed, the very supports on which, in the strength of divine grace, he comfortably sustained himself. Why was that prospect now to terrify him, which had not terrified him before? Why (except on the supposition that his intellectual faculties were impaired) was he to think that principles, which the approach of death had already proved, were infirm as supports, and as truths erroneous?

Still, the grace of God might bring conviction home to his mind. And before this all-powerful (this, as some esteem it, irresistible) agent, the delusive mists of reason

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\* Letter, May 25th, 1815. Vol. IV. p. 290.



might at length clear away ; and all that prospect, which through life had been obscured, might, in a moment, break out on his astonished view in the fulness of its proportioned forms, divinely enlightened. The grace of God is a mighty agent ; and that which the spirit of the Almighty wills, that can he do within the human heart and mind. But in his agency there can be no caprice, no mutability, no discordance, no mingling of right with wrong, no causing the mind to embrace the truth at one moment, and at another moment to reject the same truth. Above all, there cannot be in the work of grace any confusion of a sound intellectual perception and a morally vitiated sense. Mr. Knox could not, under the operation of divine grace, have said to Mr. Kelly one thing, and to Mr. Cleaver another, as to the doctrinal views which he maintained. Nor could he, by the operation of the Holy Spirit three months before his death, embrace Mr. Kelly's views ; and, six weeks before that event, suffer the depository of his papers to quit him, possibly for the last time, under the delusion that those papers, when given to the world, would contain his digested views of doctrines which his heart and mind had then rejected.

But his intellect was impaired ? Be it so, for argument sake (though, in point of fact, I deny that it was, and in proof of what I say, I refer to the statements of Judge Jebb and his son ; and, I might add, of Mr. Spedding and Mr. Darby). His intellect was impaired ? what then ? Why, then, what matters it that he, for a moment, embraced Mr. Kelly's views. Are the rooted and grounded convictions of a long life to fade before the half delirious dreams of mental decrepitude ?

Mr. Knox was never mentally weak ; Mr. Knox was never morally depraved. His judgment and his spiritual taste, to the last, remained unimpaired. I appeal to evidence which I shall now adduce, that such as he had been through life, such was he to the hour of his death. I appeal to his last prayer, written on the day before he died. It contains the very spirit of his heart's most cherished sentiments, the correct record of his mind's one

great, immutable, and imperishable truth. When his failing hand could no longer trace the characters of the words, there was still a pulse in his heart that beat true to the unvarying tone of the soundest religious sentiment. Such as was the tenour of his last written prayer—such as he had wished the prayer of Mr. Cleaver to be for him—such as through life had been his devotional aspirations—such (I am sure as moral certainty can make me), identically, in the breathings of his undying spirit, was his soul's last unutterable communion with his Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, with God Incarnate, and glorified, and communicating himself in the power of the Holy Ghost to him, even until (his mortal life ended) he exchanged the voice of prayer for a resembling voice of praise, in his new and perfected condition of a pure and blessed immortality.

The circumstances under which the Prayer, which I am about to give, was written, are, in themselves, deeply touching. And I cannot but regard them as in some sort providentially destined to clear up, in the case of one of God's faithful servants, and as respects the character of his communion with his adored Lord and Master, the very mistake into which those have fallen, who, from feelings of the most earnest (but I cannot think the most enlarged or judicious) charity, willingly drew an inference from his conversation, that his mind had adopted, or, at the least, was beginning to incline to, their own specific and widely differing views. On the day before his death,—the Thursday,—though, as we have seen,\* “the oppression (of his breathing) accompanied by a thickening of his articulation continued,” yet “he sat up, or lay on a sofa during that day;” during a part of that day, his servant Michael observed him writing: the paper which he was thus engaged on, that faithful servant, after his master's death, possessed himself of, and brought carefully to the friend to whom all his papers were intrusted,

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\* Letter from Dr. Dickinson, June 17th, 1831. P. xxix.

stating that it contained the last lines which the hand of Mr. Knox had traced, with the exception of three words only, the commencing address of a letter to that friend, which he attempted, but with which he was unable to proceed. That the state of bodily exhaustion may be made evident, I have printed this last Prayer of Mr. Knox's in a *facsimile* of his autograph. It bears marks, also, in its composition, of some slight degree of mental incorrectness. But its tone and language speak with so much the stronger force of conviction, that, whilst reason remained, his heart could breathe forth but one feeling; and (if on such an occasion I may be allowed to glance at the language of poetic fiction) that his ruling devotional principle, or, as he has himself called it, his "master passion," was, indeed, strong in death.

"O, merciful God!" (he writes) "bless me with that desire, and with that homage of the heart; open my understanding, that I may understand the Scriptures; and quicken my heart, that I may feel their power. Bless me with all that desire; bless me with that knowledge, and with that homage of the heart: and oh, blessed Redeemer, establish my mind and heart into obedience to thyself!

"Oh, merciful God! deepen thy own invaluable work in me. Set me the love of Thee, my Father, and of Thee, O my Redeemer, on the throne of my heart. And bring every movement of my mind and heart into subjection to Thee, O Father! and to Thee, O Redeemer! and deepen thy most invaluable work in me.

"Endear his holy religion in its depth, in its fulness, and in all its tempers, to my heart's heart; make me unfeignedly thankful for thy mercies; forgive all my sins, for the sake of the Redeemer. Incline and enable me, and incline and enable, to commit myself unreservedly to Thee.

"Bless me with every holy desire, bless me with that knowledge and with that homage of the heart.

"Add solidity and depth to what you hast prepared





15 Dec 1843

Walter Whitman my dear friend  
I am with the Harriet & with the Harriet  
the heart.

Add solicitude & deep interest for each  
prepared for the work of the day  
on the whole work the work for the Lord  
Jesus Christ's sake

for me ; and work and deepen thy own invaluable work into me, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake."

This Prayer, and that introduced at page xxvi., are the only manuscript Prayers composed for his own use, which have been discovered among Mr. Knox's papers, subsequent to his fragmentary diary of 1801.

I have copied this interesting document exactly, with all its grammatical errors, all its verbal inaccuracies. The mind was failing for the things of earth, but it held fast to its bond in heaven. The current of thought and desire flowed on unbroken ; and, whilst " the redemption of the body " was yet " waited for," the Spirit helped the man's infirmity ; itself making intercession for him. And He that searcheth the heart, knew what was the mind of the Spirit, because he was making intercession for that saint " according to the will of God."

If, in addition to evidence thus conclusive, any thing remains to be said, it is simply to remind the reader how often, how consecutively, in how near connexion, and up to how late a period, we have Mr. Knox's own words for the fact, that his opinions continued such as they had ever been. And, in this chain of unbroken dates, there is something which, to my mind, bears strong marks of a care far surpassing the casualty of human circumstances. That such records should have ever existed, is more than might have been looked for ; that they should have been preserved, so as now to be, from various quarters, forthcoming, is a fact somewhat remarkable ; that the last, the strongest, and the most conclusive, should have been supplied by his own hand, when life was all but extinct, and that a domestic should have preserved the scrap of paper on which it was written, amidst the confusion immediately consequent on his beloved master's death—this crowns the climax of (what many will call) fortunate improbabilities. But that all these circumstances should be concurrent, in a case in which a charge is pinned down to a particular moment,—and we are told that all our arguments are vain, if we cannot dis-



prove it by facts subsequent to that moment—this is what serious minds will be disposed to regard as providential; as evidencing the hand of the Master extended over his servant, to protect him and the truth for which he had laboured, from the injuries which, through him, were aimed at his opinions, when he, who could best have repelled them, had been long silent in the grave.

The value of such documents as these, was full in the mind of one, who, at the time when he would gladly have published his thoughts, had no idea that such ample means of refutation were at hand, as those with which I am providentially thus furnished. I shall, I hope, be pardoned for quoting, without his express leave, a few sentences of his, which are so well put, that I do not like to keep them wholly back, though, at the time, I used my influence (and I thank him for allowing me to use it with success) for the withholding of a defence, undertaken by one who never knew Mr. Knox otherwise than through his published works, but who had espoused the cause, as he believed, of truth suffering injury. This volunteer champion addressed a letter to a most respectable journal, which would have admitted it. I urged, as my particular desire, that no partial inquiry should be entered into; pledging myself to a complete investigation, in the proper place, at the best time. My anonymous (and then unknown) correspondent thus concludes what he had then written:—"Those who, on the strength of Mr. Kelly's statement, are now 'rejoicing in the belief' (I use the words from the Answers to Correspondents in the last Number of the Christian Observer) 'that Mr. Knox, in his last days, discarded every refuge of lies to which in his life he resorted, and died in a better hope than that in which he had so long lived,' declare that they will listen to no counter statement on the subject, that is not of the date of Mr. Kelly's interview with Mr. Knox, or subsequent to it. Every thing else they will consider but as so much waste paper. Thus, too, we may reasonably conclude, they would have acted

on the strength of the report in 1829, had Mr. Knox died then. They would have rejoiced then in the thought, that he had, in his last days, discarded his refuges of lies, &c. And would have refused to listen to, as irrelevant, every counter statement, &c. But would justice have thus been done to Mr. Knox then? Would the cause of truth have been served by their upholding and propagating the statement of 1829? And what has the present statement more to recommend it as trustworthy? The author of the first statement founded it, as Mr. Kelly does, upon a private conversation with Mr. Knox; derived it from a misunderstanding of the very term in question now; was of the same religious views as Mr. Kelly, and equally entitled with him to a hearing, as not intending to deceive. In short, in origin, in import, and in object, the present statement is the very counterpart of the first. It differs but in this, that Mr. Knox is not alive himself to contradict it."

Mr. Knox, however, by anticipation, contradicted it, so long as he was alive. He contradicted it in October, 1829, in his (now published) letters to Mr. Forster. He contradicted it in 1830, in his published letter of December 23d. In conversation with Mr. Scott he contradicted it, about one year before his death (according to one date; but, if the other prove the true one, then about two months before he died). In the making of his will, and delivery of his papers, he virtually contradicted it, in February 1831. In taking his final leave of his friends, he in like manner contradicted it in the end of the ensuing April. In May, his conversation with Mr. Jebb contradicted it; and, shortly after, his conversation with Judge Jebb. About the same time, he contradicted it most directly and expressly, in his language to Mr. Cleaver. To Mr. O'Sullivan he contradicted it. To Mr. Darby, a fortnight before he died, he contradicted it, coupling his contradiction with a pointed contrast between his own views, and what he deemed the unsound views of those who are called evangelicals. On the 4th

of May he contradicted it, as to one portion of it (his advancing agreement with this school of theology); and, on the day before his death, he contradicted the alleged fact of depression, as arising at any time from religious terrors: both these contradictions he uttered to Mr. Spedding. He contradicted it in the reception of the sacrament of the Lord's supper at the hands of Mr. J. J. Digges La Touche. But the contradiction which was, of all, the most conclusive, because it was in terms the strongest, and in time the latest, that Mr. Knox ever gave, was the Prayer in which he, as it were, resigned his soul into God's hands, asking only that the same blessings, after which he had all his life aspired, should be now, at the end of his life, more and more wrought into him, by the truly evangelical power of Christ's spirit.

I have entered into this question with great minuteness. I have paid (as was due) all the attention of which I am capable to statements and reasonings, which (however highly and affectionately I esteem their authors) I consider, as in proof of their argument, to be of no weight. I have done this, because I am compelled to do it; I have no choice: the knowledge of facts which I possess, is no conviction to others; unless I bring it forward, it is as though it existed not, in respect to them. And, in bringing it forward, I well know that nothing can safely be left unsaid. There are those who will be ready to assert that, what is not disproved, cannot be disputed; that, if any thing be passed by, it is a point which I dare not touch on. Every quarter must be guarded, when we know not from whence may come attack.

My act, I have said, is not my own choice: I have, in fact, done nothing that in duty I could help doing. I have courted no inquiry; I have declined none: I am a retired man, and I dislike publicity; I wish not discussion, yet I refuse it not. If other charges shall rise up,—and any charge has a colour of respectability—I will (in meekness I hope) endeavour truly to refute it.



There is but one thing with which I will have nothing to do—conflict: I will carry on no warfare. If I can, I will maintain unity of spirit; at all events, I will not break the bond of peace.

Alas! that that holy bond should be so often broken; that even brethren should, in their journeys (and while carrying with them the temporary supply of their souls' famine), that these should "fall out by the way!" And about what do we differ? and for what fall out? About the way in which we are travelling together; not about the end we all have in view. It is words, not things, that engender the bitterest differences. Men agreed on essentials, quarrel for circumstantials; they fight for modes more than for substances; they must have perfect unity as to the nicest subtleties of human reasoning, and yet they cannot come to one understanding as to the meaning of arbitrary sounds.

What is the real meaning of the clamour raised against Mr. Knox? It is the never-failing dispute on the nature of justification. And why is Mr. Knox assailed? and depreciating assertions made, and hard terms used, and grievous loss incurred of liberal enlargement of mind, and, I fear, of Christian charity? Why? Because on this vexed question, Mr. Knox has thought much and deeply, and reasoned powerfully; and, for years, manfully maintained what he conscientiously believed to be the truth; and because, in doing so, he has not thought and argued along with a particular portion of Christ's Church, with those who espouse the opinions which Luther first advocated, and Calvin advanced; and which the Protestant Churches of the Continent generally maintain, and which numbers (among whom are many of the best men) of the Church of England cling to: because, differing from all these (not as to the thing itself, but as to a modification of the doctrine by which they teach the thing), Mr. Knox asserts himself to stand on the side of the concurrent sense of Catholicity for fourteen hundred years; and contends, that the litur-

gical formularies of the Church of England are in harmony with the universal and perpetual consent of the ancient Church ; and further contends, that the Articles of the Reformed Catholic Church, the Church of England (which were articles of peace), may more reasonably be urged in support of the universal than of the particular and (strictly speaking) the Protestant sense of the term justification.

That is the true head and front of Mr. Knox's offending ; and with this are coupled (erroneously, but unjustly) depreciating assertions respecting kindred modes of believing : assertions that he rested on his own righteousness ; that virtually he denied the doctrine of the atonement ; that he left himself without a Saviour ; that he depended not on Christ.

That such assertions are unfounded, that they are most widely opposed to the real truth of the case, will be seen (so as, I think, to be acknowledged) in the volume which contains Mr. Knox's Letters — the biography of his inner life. Whatever Mr. Knox thought, or with whomsoever he held common opinions, that he took Christ for his Saviour, and the work of Christ for his sole dependence, no man of common candour and discernment will, I believe, any more deny. Such gross attacks as have been made, will probably be made no longer : the ashes of Mr. Knox's religious memory will thus far rest in peace. But his doctrine of justification will be still denied ; nor do I desire that it should not be denied. I desire only that, if his opponents can disprove it, they should, on solid grounds, disprove it ; that they should convict Mr. Knox of anti-catholic error or heresy ; that they should shew wherein he differs from the Reformed Catholic Church of England ; and that, appealing to these standards, they should prove him scripturally unsound.

There are many who will not allow this to be a legitimate demand ; many who call themselves true sons of the Church of England, and who yet deny that the inter-

pretation of Scripture, according to the voice of the primitive Church, is a standard to which churchmen ought to appeal for their right understanding of what is the truth of Scripture doctrines. But the number is increasing of those who think otherwise. The principle of tradition (as rightly understood, and as ably expounded by Mr. Knox, and his pupil, friend, and coadjutor, Bishop Jebb),—this principle, which, in every fluctuation of various error, is sure anchoring-ground,—this has begun to extend itself pretty widely within the community of the Church of England, and has advocates who are carrying it far enough—I hope they will not push it too far. The principle has been applied to other dogmas of modern theology; and the result (with those who admit the appeal to antiquity) has been, to shatter the stronghold of Calvinism to the ground. Mr. Faber, in his *Treatise on the Primitive Doctrine of Election*, has done the very work, in one quarter, which, in another (scarcely of less importance to the defences of real Christianity), I should rejoice to see as well done. If I am not presumptuous in appealing to him, I would here appeal, in behalf of the doctrine of justification; asking that he would try it by that very standard which he has so happily applied to the doctrine of election. I appeal to him, because he has declared himself an uncompromising advocate of the principle of a sound test for Christian doctrines. I appeal, in the same voice, to all who would try the truths of Christianity by a catholic test. Had I the reading or the scholarship, I would make no such appeal to any man; I would myself undertake the work, as one of good service. But I know my own deficiencies: I have neither the knowledge nor the abilities which would qualify me to do it critically and satisfactorily. I have recourse, therefore, to those who possess both.

Mr. Faber will not, I hope, think me unduly urgent, if, in bringing this request before him, I remind him of his own sound sentiments in his own conclusive words: “It struck me,” says he, “that those doctrines” (the



doctrine of the Trinity, and the allied doctrine of Christ's essential Godhead), "if exhibiting the real mind of Scripture, must have been held by catholic Christians from the very beginning; and, conversely, that those doctrines, if not held by catholic Christians from the beginning, could not be reasonably viewed as exhibiting the real mind of Scripture."\*

"All who take this line of argument, must honestly carry it throughout, or else altogether relinquish it, as inefficient and unsatisfactory; for, on no just principle can a man be allowed to pick and choose according to his own arbitrary humour."†

On the consentient principles of these paragraphs, I would earnestly desire that Mr. Faber, or some equally competent scholar, would try the doctrine of justification by faith, in that mode in which it is now, most generally, received. All who acknowledge consentient catholicity as a test of the sense in which Scripture is truly interpreted, would, at once, see whether Mr. Knox's views on that great point are erroneous or correct.

The argument, to be conclusive with Church-of-England Christians, should be further carried on into the formularies of that portion of the Catholic Church of which they have professed themselves members. It should descend from its Liturgy into its Articles; and it should do so, on the principle that the one cannot contradict the other, that the Articles cannot militate against the Liturgy; but, rather, that they, as later formularies and subsidiary, must, in right reason, be interpreted as the Liturgy prescribes. The question should be argued negatively and positively; it should be shewn what the Church Catholic of the three first centuries, and the Reformed Anglican Catholic Church, did not hold from the beginning; what it held never; what it once held primitively; and what it still holds:—may that be perpetual to the end! An inquiry of this nature, conducted ably and in a good spirit,

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\* Preface, p. vii.

† Preface, p. xx.

would, I am satisfied, tend much to edification, and something towards peace. It would establish those who recognise the ground on which it rests; and it would take from those who, rejecting that ground, maintain the rights of Protestantism in its most individual form, all power justly to call (and, it may be hoped, all inclination, on any terms, to esteem) those who think as the Church of Christ thought from the first, and authoritatively for fourteen hundred years, a sect, self-taught men, or, in any sense of the terms, maintainers of a heresy.

Mr. Knox was, in no sense of the term, a heretic, if either he himself knew what he was, or what heresy is. Neither was he the founder of any new school. "I am a Christian," he says, "of the three first centuries," as respects the Catholic Church of Christ. "I am a Christian of the seventeenth century," as respects that pure and reformed part of Christ's Apostolic Church which is established in these kingdoms. That was Mr. Knox's judgment respecting himself; nor will any candid and discriminating person, who shall read his works, not partially, but with the intention of deciding on them as a whole, come, in the end, to any other judgment.

Mr. Knox was singularly averse to change; and, in his own case, marvellously little given to changing. In his doctrinal views, however the fruits of any of them had been ripened, radically, from his early manhood, his mind had been the same. Such changes as really occurred in Mr. Knox were moral changes, the results of doctrinal facts impressed spiritually, in their own living characters, on his mind and heart. "What was supposed to be change" (I use the words of one who knew him better than any other person knew him), "what was supposed to be *change*, was *progress*; the ripening of the soul for heaven. Those who conversed with him had been accustomed to the predominance of intellect in his usual discourse. In his season of great need, the affections so strikingly took precedence of the intellect, that he was seen in a new character. He was one who, in ordinary

times, reserved the expression of all experimental religious feelings of his own inmost heart, for his prayers to God ; and, on rare occasions, for communication to his intimate and chosen friends, with whom he was conscious of entire sympathy. These feelings were always thus exercised in the communings of his own heart ; and, at times, thus communicated to others. But, towards the close of life, they were made known to friends of a less intimate circle, to whom they were new ; and who, therefore, believed him to have attained heights, of which (in their estimate) he before knew nothing. These heights of spiritual affection, and of closer intercourse with his God and Saviour, through the Holy Spirit, he had been ever panting after. But now, his soul dwelt on nothing else. All subjects of mere discussion sank into insignificance before the affectionate aspirations of a spirit longing to find itself freed from the bonds of the body, in the presence of *Him* whom he knew to be his soul's only rest and full happiness."

Into that presence he is now gone. And, having " beheld God's presence in righteousness" here, it is no presumption to say that " awaking up after his likeness, he is satisfied with it."

What is, and what will be, the effect of his writings, it is not for me to say. I have my opinion on that subject ; but my partialities would, not improperly, detract from its weight. Many have told me what they think ; among these are two whom I esteem first-rate authorities. Neither of them accords wholly with Mr. Knox's views ; neither of them knew him when alive ; nor was conversant with his modes of thought, or with his writings. The one stands high among the first ranks of our divines and theologians. He has given it as his opinion that the writings of Mr. Knox will produce a considerable effect on the theology of the country. The other is pre-eminent among our writers, as well as critics. He volunteered to tell me, that no book of his time (and he has closely watched the literature of the age for forty years) has



produced such an effect on the public mind as "The Remains of Mr. Knox;" not simply as evidencing its author's extraordinary talent, but also as impressing its own tone of sentiment, and influencing the thoughts and feelings of other minds. I augur well from this, for the interests of true religion; both for the Church of Christ in its universal character, and for that particular exemplification of catholicity, the Church of England. A day is, I think, fast coming, when faith shall obtain its destined empire; when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ; when reason and religion shall be found to be in perfect harmony and union together; when the true voice of revelation shall be universally acknowledged as the inspirations of Deity, fully informing and completely satisfying every power and every faculty of human intelligence and human affection. Then, and not till then, will the manifold wisdom of God be rightly appreciated: and it will be seen what the Church and the world owe to those schools of the Divine training, which have produced such men and such teachers as Mr. Knox.

"I greatly suspect (says that sagacious Christian philosopher) that the time is not far distant when even theological creeds will be brought to a philosophical test" (he means the test of sound Christian philosophy, the knowledge of the connexion between spiritual causes and effects); "and be discarded, should they not stand the trial. At such a season, I can have little hope for those who are acquainted with St. Paul, through the medium of Luther, or Calvin, Dr. Owen, or Mr. Romaine. Confident I am, they will awake, and wonder how they could have dreamed of man's chief hope resting on any ground but that moral one, upon which our blessed Lord has placed it, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God;' or of a state of favour with God existing for one moment independently of moral qualification. They will, I doubt not, discover this defect in their present systems: and, should no sounder system have come within their view,

what will follow, but lapse, by masses, into Socinianism or Deism?

“On the principles which I have been led (providentially, I trust) to embrace, I have nothing about which to be apprehensive. I do not believe with the moderns; and, therefore, am in no danger from their vacillation. It is, doubtless, no little comfort to me, that the Church of England (legitimately defined\*) seems so substantially to sanction my views. And it is a still greater comfort, that, if I know my own heart, my sentiments lead to no self-deception, no relaxing of self-discipline, no needless conformity with the world. I find, or think I find, the ‘*quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est*,’ an equally sure guide both as to belief and practice. And, while I am in rational unison with this concurrent voice, I seem to myself to be, in some measure, within the citadel of that mystic city, whose outer court was left open to the treading down of the Gentiles, but whose central enclosure was to be fortified by an invisible, but impassable, barrier.

“Yet this would be poor consolation, if I had not happy prospects for the world as well as for myself. Yes, I earnestly hope that the worst which can happen will be only so much the more subservient to the cause of eternal, immutable truth. ‘*Opinionum commenta delet dies; judicia Naturæ confirmat.*’

“And assured I am, that, in God’s good time, the real essentials of revealed truth,—namely, the Trinity in Unity, the incarnation of the Second Person, (*verus Deus ex vero Deo*) and the influences of the Holy Spirit, as real as they are necessary in order to regeneration and sanctification (life and growth), these, I say, I am assured, will shine forth to the eye of unsophisticated reason with such bright evidence as will abash opposition, silence cavil, satisfy doubt, and create settled, immovable conviction.

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\* That is, as it has defined itself, in regard to doctrinal opinions, in its liturgical formularies, and its Articles interpreted in accordance with those formularies.

Then, and not before, I conceive, will the doctrinal admixtures, which have successively been employed, like loam about the juncture of a graft, by Augustin, Calvin, Dr. Owen, and Mr. Romaine, &c., be superseded; and truth and nature will be knit together in perfect, indissoluble union."

I have done: it was once my intention to have given here, from Mr. Knox's published writings, a refutation of the calumnies that have been heaped on him as the denier of some doctrines which he cordially maintained, and the upholder of others which he disavowed as cordially. It was, also, in my thoughts to have brought together, from the same publications, the entire system of Mr. Knox's published sentiments, and profession of doctrinal belief. But, I have already filled too many pages of these volumes; and have myself occupied a place far too conspicuous for my liking. Here, therefore, I close; having, I would fain hope, accomplished all that is, strictly, needful to vindicate the truth which it was my duty to defend. I am not conscious of having, according to my ability, left any thing undone that is due to the memory of Mr. Knox: I have not wilfully hurt the feelings of any to whom I am opposed; neither, I believe, have I, in any respect, broken my faith with the public.\* Last autumn, I requested them to "suspend their judgment till the ensuing spring;" when documents should appear "that would enable every candid and discerning man to form a true judgment." I have now produced such means of judging without reserve. I appeal to that judgment with confidence. And, further, I appeal, whether, in any respect, I have fallen short of my promise, that, in the end, it would be seen, "that Mr. Knox's theological views remained unchanged; that, to his friends of what is called the evangelical persuasion, he, to the last, expressed his continued dissent from their views; that to those who thought with him, he reiterated his constancy of opinion,

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\* Letter to the Morning Herald, Nov. 2, 1836.



and the support which he derived under great nervous suffering, from the influences of the Holy Spirit, in the line of those doctrinal sentiments which he had unvaryingly maintained ; and that the last lines which his hand traced, in characters scarcely legible, were a Prayer for the deepening of evangelical religion in his heart, but under no altered views of evangelical doctrines."

"These facts" are "before the public" now ; and "they will, I have no doubt, correctly draw their own inferences."

JAMES J. HORNBY.

*Winwick Hall.* April 21, 1837.

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P.S. I beg to express my cordial thanks for the kind and liberal assistance which I have received from many quarters. I am particularly indebted to the Rev. Dr. Stedman, the Rev. Charles Forster, John Schoales, Esq. and J. S. Harford, Esq. for the use of valuable letters and private papers. Nor am I under less obligation to the friendly zeal of those gentlemen who have borne their testimony to the consistency of Mr. Knox's doctrinal sentiments. To all I return my most sincere thanks.

## A FRAGMENT

ON THE LEADING POINTS INSISTED ON IN THE  
NEW TESTAMENT.

### SECTION I.

1805.

IF the question should be asked, "What is the leading point insisted on in the New Testament?" probably not many, even of the more thinking class of Christians, would be able to give a clear and ready answer.

One reason of this is, that most readers of the Holy Scriptures regard them merely as a miscellaneous assemblage of truths to be believed, precepts to be obeyed, and examples to be imitated, without ever inquiring whether this apparently unstudied arrangement does not actually contain within it a most regular system, in which one part is strictly dependent on another, and all the parts meet in one grand central principle.

The inattention I refer to is, however, not confined to readers. No small number of commentators appear chargeable with the same oversight. While they have been attentive to the parts, they have neglected the scope of the whole. In what concerns the history, the philology, and even the morality of the Scripture, they have often done

valuable service. But that which not unfitly may be called the *philosophy* of the Sacred Volume in general, and of the New Testament in particular, has seldom, if ever, been adequately investigated.

There was, doubtless, a time in which a systematic method of interpreting Scripture was carried to a hurtful excess, each commentator having his own mind preoccupied with some scheme of theology which it was his great object to maintain by authorities derived from the word of inspiration. Of this scholastic method, the wise Lord Bacon expressed a disapprobation, which may possibly have given countenance to the opposite extreme. It was no unjust representation of those systematising theologians, to describe them as "forcing up" the water of life "into a cistern, and from thence fetching and deriving" it "for use;" in which state, adds he, "though it seems to be more ready, yet, in my judgment," it "is more subject to corrupt." When, however, he recommends as a substitute the "solute," or immethodical plan (which he considers as "drawing or receiving" the Divine Water "in buckets and vessels immediately where it springeth,") may we not justly apprehend that one error is suggested as a remedy for the other? But although the generality of modern annotators and paraphrasts have looked for no connected scheme in the Scripture, and have, consequently, pursued no regular method in their interpretation of it, some even to this day have persevered in the very course which Bacon censured, and are as zealous as any of their predecessors, in ascribing to our Redeemer and his



Apostles those subtle systems of metaphysical divinity, which were scarcely known in the Christian Church for the first four hundred years.

That the disciples of these theologists would readily undertake to answer the question which I first stated, is not to be doubted. But their reply would too probably be derived rather from the authors whom they most admire, than from the Scripture itself. This, however, I most readily allow, that, in proportion as they themselves were personally pious, they would be apt to rise above their own dogmatic system; and express, from an honest feeling, those central truths which their hearts, rather than their understandings, had deduced from the sacred volume.

In order, then, to do full justice to that word with which God has favoured us, and to ascertain with clearness what is meant by that "one thing needful" to which the divine apparatus of the Gospel is, by that very expression of our Saviour, declared to be subordinate, ought we not to avoid both the extremes which have been mentioned, and adopt a middle course, which, being neither (in Lord Bacon's sense) "methodical" nor "solute," may possibly combine the advantages of both? Instead of forcing divine truth, on the one hand, into a mould which man has formed for it, or of assuming, on the other hand, that it has no regular form of its own, ought we not, with unprejudiced attention, to examine it in itself as it lies before us in the Sacred Volume? And, as the great writer already referred to has compared philosophy in general to a tree whose many "branches meet in

a stem," but which stem having a "dimension and quantity of entireness, and continuance before it come to discontinue and break itself into arms and boughs," ought, therefore, to be duly apprehended "before we come" where the branches "part and divide themselves." So, must we not naturally suppose that a like organisation will be found in the divine philosophy of the Gospel, and that a like attention is necessary to be paid to its leading principle before we can rightly apprehend the ultimate results of which that principle is productive ?

The sacred Scripture reveals various truths, and it enjoins various duties ; yet, in the midst of this variety, we hear from the great Author of truth and Arbiter of duty himself, that one thing is needful ; that is, evidently, there is one grand principle to which all those truths lead, and from which all those duties flow. Here, therefore, we have actually presented to us that very organisation which was just supposed. At the bottom of the system we find a multiplicity of truths ; at the top of the system we find an equal multiplicity of duties. The former being as it were the roots ; the latter the fruitful branches. If one thing, then, be needful, it must necessarily occupy the place of the main stem, to whose nourishment the roots serve, and on whose firmness and transmissive influences the branches are dependent. Such, I conceive, is the fair semblance of that order, into which this two-fold variety and central unity must necessarily dispose themselves.

What, then, we naturally ask, is that great principle to which we are to be led by the various

truths, and through which we are to accomplish the various duties ; that is, attain to all the blessed virtues of our divine religion ? It must be essentially moral in its nature. Its results being so substantially and eminently moral, it must be something not only to be understood by us, but realised in us ; else it could not produce those effects which the place it holds in the divine system obliges us to ascribe to it.

The grand object insisted on in the New Testament cannot, therefore, be any divine fact, once for all accomplished in our behalf, nor any mere truth promulgated to us ; because such facts, however glorious, and such truths, however important, must be regarded as means in order to some further end. But it belongs to the nature of means and ends, that, let the former be in themselves ever so great and excellent when considered as means, they are but subordinate parts of the system, the leading part of every system being that which accomplishes the purpose of the projector.

Thus, the death of the Redeemer upon the cross for the sins of the world, though it will be that which will call forth the grateful praises of the just made perfect throughout the ages of eternity, is, nevertheless, not the matter mainly dwelt upon in the New Testament. Because, great and marvellous as this transaction ever shall be accounted, it was in itself but an indispensable means of effecting a yet further process. " He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works." How efficacious soever,



then, the death of the Son of God is, however infinite our obligations to the Father, who gave his only begotten Son, and to the Son, who gave himself, still the object which demands our most practical attention, is not so much the glorious act thus done, as the purpose for which it was done. This, in the nature of things, was the leading object of Him who formed, and of Him who executed the scheme; and, by infallible consequence, it should be ours also. It is self-evident, that whatever was God's end in the work of our redemption should be ours also; not only because God's thoughts, as far as they are discoverable by us, are the only sure standard of ours; but because we ourselves, being strictly and essentially the subjects of the undertaking, and it being an indispensable part of the plan, that we, as moral agents, should be workers together with God in its accomplishment, the success of the design must, in part, depend on the comparative estimate which we make of means and ends, being as much correspondent as our weakness will admit of to the views of the all-wise Author.

Doubtless, the act accomplished on the cross was, in the view of the eternal Father, infinitely more glorious than any thing that could be achieved by the united wisdom and virtue of all the created intelligences in the universe; yet, evidently, the act itself was not that in which the divine mind rested; it anticipated consequences, in which infinite love was interested, for the sake of which God spared not his own Son; and in the view of which, Christ himself endured the cross, despising the shame.

To these consequences, then, we too must advance our thoughts, in order that we may (in the language of St. Paul) “apprehend that for which also we are apprehended of Christ Jesus.”

The immediate effects of our Saviour’s death and resurrection are distinctively pointed out by the apostolic writers; and the uniform grandeur and energy of their expressions, whenever they recur to these sublime subjects, shew clearly how much they were impressed with them. In fact, they never lose sight of them in one form or other. Atonement, propitiation, redemption, the priesthood, sacrifice, and intercession, of Christ, are ideas which are ever presenting themselves, and are uniformly recognised as describing the great foundations by which the whole dispensation of the Gospel is supported. But it requires to be well observed, that though these divine facts are continually pointed to, they are not the matters chiefly enlarged upon. They are, as I said, the evident, undeniable foundations; but, as foundations, they are laid that they may be built upon. They are, of course, constantly referred to, as done once for all; while the subject dilated and insisted on, is the structure which is to be built upon them. It may, indeed, be said that these great truths are much more even than foundations. They are also permanent sources of consolation and encouragement. Yes, most certainly, but of consolation and encouragement congruous with the great end of the system. The declaration of the divine Redeemer, that one thing is needful, has been already adduced; and this so obviously implies that all things which

He himself did in the first instance, or still does for us, are the appropriate means of accomplishing this one thing, as to preclude us from deriving the least comfort from any part of the Christian economy any further than this leading object of it is effectually promoted.

But it may be said, was it not the great object of Christ's assuming our nature, and appearing in the form of a servant, that he might offer an atoning sacrifice for the sins of mankind; and is not this sacrifice the only certain source of our comfort, as being the only ground on which we can hope for acceptance with God? But if so, is not the leading us to an unmixed and cordial reliance upon this divine propitiation the leading purpose of the new covenant?

I reply; God forbid that I should in word or thought depreciate the great sacrifice, and all prevalent intercession, of Him who is "a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedech." But as the true method of honouring this great feature of the Christian dispensation, is to be learned only from the word of the Author; so, whatever we find there stated respecting it, is to be implicitly received and relied upon as that which can neither misrepresent nor mislead. Now, the question simply is, for what purpose are our blessed Saviour and his apostles accustomed, in the New Testament, to adduce or refer to these fundamental verities? Is it that we may be encouraged to place our confidence in the divine fact itself, as if that had accomplished our salvation, and completed the great design of the eternal Father? Is it not rather, that we might be



induced by such glorious preparations to seek the blessings which are thus ensured to persevering endeavours, and to rely with certainty on the effectual co-operation of that love which has thus afforded us every conceivable pledge, and furnished us with every necessary means, of spiritual and eternal well-being.

It is surely matter of wonder, that any attentive reader of the New Testament could for one moment think of putting the divine mediation of the Messiah in the place of its great and glorious purposes. And yet, is not something equivalent to this done, when the mediation of Christ is resorted to, as in itself a sufficient ground of our hopes? Is it rational to suppose that the all-wise God, after having provided the most elaborate means (if we may apply such an epithet) in order to a much desired end, will be satisfied with our offering Him back those means as a substitute for that end? If it be explicitly declared, that "Christ gave himself for us,—the just for the unjust, *that he might bring us to God*;"<sup>1</sup> and if it be asserted by the same Apostle that "there are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by them we might become partakers of the divine nature,"<sup>2</sup> shall we think that Christ's giving himself for us will in any point of view stand instead of our being brought to God, or that the *preciousness* of the promises can rationally support under the conscious want of that divine nature, our attainment of which

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<sup>1</sup> 1 St. Peter, iii. 18.

<sup>2</sup> 2 St. Peter, i. 4.

is the one great purpose for which those promises were given ?

If the salvation proposed to us in the Gospel, were to consist of extrinsic circumstances, of crowns and sceptres, and gardens of pleasure, and ever varying yet never exhausted gratifications of sense and imagination ; then, perhaps, the full persuasion of a purchase effected for us, and of immutable promises made to us, might be sufficient to afford such rest to our minds as the nature of so inadequate a prospect could admit of. But, inasmuch as the salvation to which our Redeemer invites us, is clearly of another kind, being indeed neither more nor less, ultimately, or, as the school divines term it, objectively, than the spiritual and eternal enjoyment of Him, of whom, and through whom, and to whom, are all things, (or, as it is most compendiously expressed in the former of the above quotations, the being brought to God), and neither more nor less, immediately and subjectively, than the making us morally capable of such enjoyment, (that is, as the latter of the above quotations with like felicity describes it, the being made partakers of the divine nature ;) it follows, that all the laws of nature concur with the uniform voice of Scripture, to warn us against the delusion of putting even the most glorious means in the place of their accomplished ends ; or that any thing else than what St. Peter's two sublime ideas amount to, can be really and effectually our salvation either here or hereafter.

The matter of acceptance with God needs, per-

haps, as much to be cleared up as any idea which, as Christians, we are used to entertain. It is common to conceive of God as a master who gives wages, or a sovereign who confers rewards and allots punishments; and therefore the mind is too generally confined to some appointed standard of distributive justice, to which some look up with anxiety, as that to which their moral conduct ought actually to correspond, in order to their having a title to everlasting bliss; while others contemplate the selfsame standard with confidence and joy in the thought, that all its claims on them have been so fully anticipated by Christ their representative, as even on its most rigid principles to ensure to them a favourable issue. That such figurative terms as Master, and Sovereign, and Justice, and Law, are made frequent use of in Scripture, is evident: but surely enough is to be found in the New Testament, for the purpose of shewing, that all these figures are merely meant to lead us to that moral fitness of things which grows out of the immutable nature of God. Doubtless, every image in Holy Writ has as much truth and fitness in it as is there strictly allotted to it. But figurative representations must ever be explained in subordination to express essential ultimate truths. For example, can any rhetorical illustration, the full bearing of which we may not distinctly understand, come into competition with that unrefracted beam of Heavenly Light, darted upon us by our Divine Saviour, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God?" This, if it be not our own fault, we cannot but understand; and must perceive, if



our minds are not blinded, that it is as central a principle as Divine Wisdom itself could communicate through human language. This is, indeed, the amount of St. Peter's two propositions; and, few as the terms are, they satisfy us at once, that truth itself is here manifesting its own eternal essence; to "see God," being the one only happiness; and purity of heart, the one only qualification. Adhering, then, to this immutable standard, what acceptance can there be with God, but so far as this word of infinite wisdom is received by, and realised in us? If God wills, and elaborately contrives, our happiness, what can be acceptable to him in respect to us, but our actual attainment of, or approach toward this happiness? If the immutable laws of nature admit of no happiness for moral beings but the enjoyment of God, what can be acceptable to our Supreme Benefactor but the actual return of our hearts to himself? And, if purity of heart be essential to our seeing him, the view of whom is our one felicity, what short of that purity can meet his benignant purpose, or, of consequence, come up with acceptance on his altar? May we not, then, dare to assert, that, though our primary trust is to be exercised on the Divine mediation, for every thing which we need, in order to the fulfilment of God's purposes concerning us, we are ever to feel, that the all-wise and all-gracious Being can only accept of us, that is, approve of and be satisfied with us, so far as that purpose is pursued by us, and realised in us?

## SECTION II.

I CONCEIVE that, in the course of the foregoing observations, we have obtained, almost unawares, a conclusive answer to the question first proposed: for, in what terms could the leading object of the Christian Religion be more explicitly stated, than in the latter passage quoted from St. Peter, "There are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these we might be partakers of the divine nature?" That the Apostle meant to affix this importance to his words, is evident from the terms themselves. Exceeding great and precious promises, is only another expression for the Gospel; and the declared purpose for which these promises are given, is obviously the most excellent and consummate which divine goodness itself could resolve upon concerning us. To what dignity could created beings be raised beyond the participation of that moral nature of God, which constitutes his own eternal excellence and felicity? The idea is such as speaks for itself, and he who attempts to add clearness to it, is in danger of obscuring its brightness.

Let any sober mind weigh this expression, and judge whether it is not the most self-evident definition of the one thing needful, spoken of by our Saviour. For what can we conceive of wisdom, rectitude, or happiness, which is not implied in a partaking of the divine nature? The perfection of created intelligences can alone consist in their adherence to, and enjoyment of, the Supreme Intelli-

gence. But such adherence and enjoyment essentially depend on likeness of nature. To attain the likeness of nature, therefore, to our Great Original, must necessarily be deemed the one great concern of our existence. Could, then, any thing be more reasonably supposed, than that, when we had lost our original portion of the divine nature, and were miserable through the want of it, the benignity of God should employ itself in remedying this evil? and might we not conclude that, when Divine wisdom had projected a scheme of reinstatement, the repossessing us with the animating principle we had lost, with that divine nature, wherein consisted the genuine life of our souls, and from which alone could arise real virtue or substantial comfort, would be the great object to which the plan would be adapted; and, with a view to which, all its elementary parts would be arranged and adjusted?



LETTER TO MAJOR WOODWARD ON  
DOCTRINAL POINTS.

MY DEAR MAJOR,

Bellevue, June 2, 1807.

It has not been for want of a very sincere inclination that you are so long without hearing from me. A general indolence, I too well know, forms a part of my natural habit; and therefore, little matters, which firmer resolution might readily surmount, occur continually, and seduce me into procrastination. I did, however, actually begin a letter to you on the 20th day of last month; and, after filling one page, I was called away. When I came back, I found my ink had been, in the meantime, overthrown, and my written page so deeply blackened, as to make it useless to go on with it. Then came James Dunn and others here, who occupied my forenoons, and, in short, left me no more time than was necessary for winding up myself, — a business which, both as it respects body and mind, in me requires a large allowance of the day. My animal spirits being easily repressed, and soon exhausted, and then needing quiet, recumbent posture, and the return of the stream of thought into its own regular channel, in order to their being recruited.

I was much gratified by your enclosure, and still more, not very long after, by a visit from the lady herself. I am much pleased with her, indeed. She

has, I think, rather exceeded my calculation than fallen short of it; and she told me many particulars, not confined to herself singly, which gave me real pleasure. I sincerely hope you will have great comfort in your friends, and that Lady —, in particular, will advance more and more in true wisdom, discreet courage, and inward, heartfelt piety. If she does, she will be a very happy creature: for her former thoughtless secular life has laid in a sufficient depth of shade to give relief to the lights that, I trust, will henceforth be introduced: and I cannot but think, that, to a thoroughly sincere mind, this, which I have mentioned, is turned into a peculiar source of strength and comfort. Still, I grant, that the uniform and cordial remembering of the Creator in youth, and through the early part of life, would be productive of yet higher blessedness; but, I fear, this is very rare, and that the most usual case is, that of negative harmlessness, and dull and narrow propriety; which, implying no feeling at all, furnish no matter for divine grace to transmute or conquer. On the contrary, the bold spirits who determinately take their course, and have nothing mawkish in them, when once subdued, have their own appropriate advantage. When they have really slain the lion of their nature, and come back to review it, like Sampson, they find within it a deposit of honey.

Lady — mentions a book in her letter — “Marshall on Sanctification.” On talking to her, I found she scarcely recollected having done so, another book being in her mind. I was glad she

knew nothing of Marshall, for, most certainly, it is neither for her, nor any one who wishes to be soberly religious. I never read it, and presume never shall, for, having repeatedly read a character of it, and an eulogium given in the works of the well-known Mr. Harvey, I am in possession of its principles and plan; and my persuasion is, that no pious man could write a much more erroneous book. It is fitted to bewilder the understandings and distract the brains of its simple readers. He conceives, that love to God can only arise from a persuasion of God's distinguishing love and mercy to the individual as chosen in Christ (of course electively, before all worlds, though that is not expressly dwelt upon), his great means of sanctification therefore, is to be ever labouring after that persuasion; that is, the assuming at all hazards, that the person has been elected to salvation. This inward exertion, which is to be made right forward, he urges as the one thing needful; and maintains, that as *this* is more or less successful in producing the persuasion, all the various results of inward and outward holiness will, more or less, infallibly follow. This I conceive to be, on various grounds, most erroneous. "The spring of true holiness is," I think, by no means what Marshall makes it, "a well-grounded persuasion of our reconciliation with God;" but, a conviction that God Himself is our most excellent and infinitely desirable end; and that sin is the worst of evils, as indisposing us for, and alienating us from, this end. If this feeling lie not at the bottom, wherein consists the piety or sanctifying tendency of either our desire or persuasion of recon-



ciliation? If a heart-relish, a spiritual appetite for the knowledge and love of the Infinite Excellence (which St. Paul nobly denominates the *Φρόνημα πνευματος*), do not primarily actuate us, our desire of reconciliation, or persuasion of it, is no more religion, than the desire of one in prison, for some criminal action, to escape from his keepers, is religion. This, however, in the syllabus of the work, given in Harvey's works, and now lying before me, seems to be not so much as thought of. But, so far as it is not thought of, the prime principle of sanctification seems to me to be omitted; and, consequently, the whole system (though the man's own heart might be much better than his understanding) is a building resting on the sand.

It is astonishing how many of the Calvinists have taken this selfish, mercenary view of Christianity, making our love to God to spring primarily from our gratitude for mercy to ourselves; not considering, that that mercy, though exercised by an infinite Benefactor, is in the act but finite, because the *object* of it is finite, and therefore cannot inspire a temper, which, to be genuine, must be unbounded. Our gratitude itself, however intense, has the nature of piety only so far as we recognise, and are supremely engaged by, the transcendent nature of the Benefactor. In fact, affectionate assimilating access to this nature, is itself the essence of the benefit; and, therefore, we can have no gratitude worthy of God, till we love Him, in the first instance, for what he is essentially. The leaving out these grand ultimate views, strikes me as the chief defect in modern Calvinism; and a defect I must

deem it, whose pernicious results could not be enumerated in a letter.

How much more suitable is the language of that wise and pious Jew, though he had not the advantage of Christian knowledge! We “may speak much, and yet come short; wherefore, in sum, *He is all*. How shall we be able to magnify Him, for he is great above all his works! When you glorify the Lord, exalt him as much as you can; for even yet will he far exceed: and when you exalt him, put forth all your strength; for you never can go far enough.” It is gratifying, that one of the most eminent Calvinist writers (I might say the most eminent) of the past century—Jonathan Edwards, of New England, has given the most direct brain-blow to this pseudo-theology, in his book on “Religious Affections.” His second mark of true religious affections is excellent on this point.

But, further, the persuasion itself, as here spoken of, seems unintelligible to common sense on any other, than the narrow Calvinistic idea of God’s electing only a few individuals. “We must,” says Marshall, “endeavour to believe, or trust in Christ, confidently persuading and assuring ourselves, according to the divine declarations, that God truly gives us an interest in Christ and his salvation, according to his gracious promise.”

Now, either this means God’s general mercy, on the principles of liberal theology, or it means special mercy on the principles of predestinarian divinity. But it cannot mean the former, because,



in this, it is taken for granted, that this mercy and grace are positively offered to all; and that none are interested in them more than others, but in proportion as they produce their vital and practical effects, according to the design of the offerer. In this sense, then, self-persuasion is superfluous; the question depending, not on the mind of the benefactor, but on our personal and actual pursuit, and acquisition of the benefit. It then evidently means, that we should persuade ourselves of God's special, electing love. But how strange would such an attempt be on such a supposition! For, on that dreadful hypothesis, how desperately attenuated would the thread of any individual's confidence be, who could rationally dare to persuade himself, that when millions were dropt together into an unfathomable abyss, he was the one of ten thousand to be snatched out of the jaws of perdition, by the specially exerted arm of Omnipotence? The generality of Mr. Marshall's Calvinist contemporaries certainly used a sounder and safer language. They did not urge any thing more than such a probable hope as might serve to excite endeavour. But, in order to actual comfort, prayer was what they recommended and relied on; prayer for effectual grace, for renovating influences, for a clean heart and right spirit; they piously and usefully, (however inconsistently) maintained, that there was no decree of God which could operate against a praying soul; that in this way the divine influences were to be waited for, might be expected, and, when communicated, would, by effects, which nothing but Omnipotence



could produce, give peace to the mind, and rationalise its confidence. This was the general language of the nonconformist divines in the seventeenth century; and though their whole system might be charged with dissonance, the consequences of their teaching did credit to their piety and moderation. They were the means of diffusing a most sincere, however, in some respects, imperfect Christianity.

If Mr. Marshall meant to lead his followers to seek the same experimental results, by his plan of self-persuasion, that the sounder Calvinists taught persons to seek by prayer, I am obliged to think, that that was only substituting enthusiastic for theoretic consolation. For, when a person imagines that he is to work himself up to a confident persuasion, in order that divine grace may strike in, and fix the persuasion thus excited, the danger is, that fancy will be mistaken for reality; or, at best, that the mind will remain in constant fluctuation, feeling a short-lived peace, so long as the persuasion can be kept up, and falling back into despondency when the tide of hope subsides. I will not say but that, when, for want of better knowledge, a weak and honest individual has set himself to such a plan of obtaining consolation, the gracious and condescending God might cause real comfort to flow into the mind, though exercised in a way whose only natural tendency was to excite imaginary comfort, just as the divine goodness may make the sight of a crucifix, or the strong idea of transubstantiation, beneficial to the mind of a Roman Catholic. But, as a method of obtaining

peace, to be generally adopted, I cannot but most sincerely deprecate it, it being, I soberly think, a special compound of presumption and delusion. I do not mean actually in those who hold it, but I mean in its natural tendency, when it is not counteracted by radical uprightness of heart.

I have gone more largely into this subject than I had thought of doing, and much more than I need have done; but I did not restrain myself, because it is a point of pretty frequent occurrence, and, of course, one on which it may not be useless to have thought. It is closely connected with that other leading position of the same school, that our acceptance with God is not in consequence of what is wrought in us by divine grace, but in consequence of what our Saviour has wrought for us, and in our stead. This is the immediate ground on which the efficacy of the persuasion spoken of above is founded; and, as far as there can be harmony in error, the notions hang very fairly together. For, if our whole salvation, acceptance with God here, and admission to his presence hereafter, are all finally and absolutely secured; but yet, if some medium be necessary, in order to our being installed in these privileges, and invested *de facto*, as well as entitled to them *de jure*, no act on our part could seem better adapted to the purpose than a confident self-persuasion of our right, without regard to any qualification in ourselves. Thus, then, exactly does Marshall put it: "The comforts of the gospel, necessary to Christian obedience, contain sufficient grounds of assurance of our salvation,



not because we believe, but in a way of immediate trust and confidence ; therefore, instead of seeking other methods of peace and holiness, we must endeavour to believe, or trust, on Christ confidently," &c. &c. (as quoted before).

I have employed some of your time, and my own, in discussing the errors of one religious book ; but, though I should have made myself clear, and proved my point, I am sorry to say it is only *exempta spinis de pluribus una*. For, the books which are in the hands of most religious people of this day, have more or less of a similar turn, and tend, I much fear, to lead their readers, in some degree, at least, from the true sources of consolation, to false or fanciful ones. I cannot but think, that a new species of pious reading is just as much requisite as any other thing that this world can be supposed in need of. At present, the best books I know, on the whole, are those which your friend, for some special reasons, is least disposed to use ; I mean those written by Roman Catholic spiritualists. I could not press them on her, and was, therefore, glad to hear her admire Scougal's " Life of God in the Soul of Man." While she likes that, she will hardly be attracted by Calvinist writers : at the same time, there is a certain interiority of feeling, which is essential to excellence in a religious author, but which, I think, appears too little in Scougal ; yet his general view is truly Christian.

I trust, that at no very distant time Christianity will be more generally represented in its own lovely form ; that is, as a plan not for reconciling man's forgiveness with God's attributes, nor even chiefly



with God's moral government, (though I presume to question none of the apparent bearings of our Redeemer's mediation toward this latter object, for in this view the solemnity of expiation might be indispensable), but eminently and essentially for renovating us, for raising us from animality to spirituality, — from alienation from God, to divine sonship, by a participation of God's moral nature, — and to consequent communion with him. I cannot but think it a great pity that any notions, however plausible, should be suffered to draw the attention from this central view ; for this, and this only, I most soberly deem the path of edification : and I am obliged to think, that if it were more simply and cordially pursued, the advancement in it would be much greater than is generally exemplified even by the sincere. The human mind is unsteady, and the human heart is deceitful. If, therefore, it be supposed that there are other matters which claim attention, the thoughts will be diverted : and, I fear, that if it be hoped that comfort may be drawn from any thing but what is accomplished in our hearts, the extrinsic will too naturally be preferred to the intrinsic source ; and the apparently rugged steep of self-denial and inward watchfulness be forsaken for the soft and level path of confidence in an immutable, inamissible salvation. To this, I cannot but ascribe that prevalence of low, comfortless, fluctuating piety, which we see and hear of, in what is called the religious world : and, therefore, I can conceive no effectual corrective for this wide spread reproach, but the deep and thorough conviction that *one*

*thing*, and, of consequence, *one thing* only, is needful—the precise nature of which is declared in so many scriptures to be inward and spiritual, as to make it wonderful that any rational person could miss the meaning. “If thou hadst asked of Him, he should have given thee living water.” “In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but a new creature.” “My little children of whom I travail in birth again, till Christ be formed in you,” &c.

It is remarkable, however, that the divinity hitherto prevalent amongst pious Protestants, has actually made not “one” but two things needful. Even the worthy John Wesley takes pains to shew that we have not *one* blessing only to ask from God, but *two* of “a widely different nature.” To these, in common with many modern writers, indeed most since the Reformation, he gives the two distinctive appellations of justification and regeneration. “The first,” says he, “implies only a relative,” the latter, “a real change. God, in justifying us, does something *for* us; in regenerating us, he does the work *in* us. The former changes our outward relation to God,—so that, of enemies, we become children. By the latter, our inmost souls are changed,—so that, of sinners, we become saints. The one restores us to the favour, the other to the image, of God.”

I conceive it is precisely this supposed distinction (which J. W. describes very fairly as he found it) that has introduced Marshall’s system; and others not less extraordinary. The thus separating God’s receiving us into his favour, from his



imparting his image to us, renders it necessary to devise some ground or consideration on which the former act is done; (inasmuch as it is stated to be done independently of the other); and hence the necessity of one or other explanatory hypothesis. How deeply this view has entered into modern divinity, appears from J. W. adopting it at once, without so much as questioning it. But I honestly own, I more than question it. I rest confident that our Divine Saviour understood his own system better than any other teacher of it; and, when he has so expressly said, that "*one thing is needful*," I am, by that simple position, withheld from admitting that there can be *two* things of a widely different nature," equally needful for us. I deny not; that there is a relative change, as well as a real change; and that God has done much for us, distinguishably from what he accomplishes in us. But I humbly think that the simplest and most scriptural method of explaining this distinction is, that he has done the former, once for all, in what our Redeemer accomplished on earth, inasmuch as he "*tasted death for every man*;" but that he effects the latter in the hearts of individuals, by the actual communication of quickening and transforming influences. The death of Christ has, I conceive, placed us collectively, in other circumstances, in order that we may each have a still deeper effect of that death wrought in us, "that we may know him and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death." While we are sincerely seeking this real and substantial



attainment, we may doubtless comfort ourselves in the pursuit, with the consideration of what Christ has done for us; because by that we are assured, that in seeking we shall find. But, surely, deep, stable, satisfactory consolation and joy must ever arise from this *one* source, that we (in some substantial degree, at least,) are actually in possession of that one simple and indivisible blessing, — a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness.

But does not the New Testament distinguish between justification and sanctification? and is it not, consequently, right that we should do so too? There is, doubtless, such a distinction; and I imagine that the not understanding this rightly, is the source of the errors I have been adverting to. From examining the use of these terms as attentively as I have been able, I infer, that they by no means differ, as J. Wesley, in conformity with so many others supposed, (that is, that in justification, something is done in our circumstances; and, in sanctification, something is done in our moral nature). I think, rather, that justification, in the New Testament, means our attaining the substance of true and genuine righteousness, such as God approves of; and sanctification, our after advancement and maturity. The one I conceive to be as strictly inward and moral as the other, with this variety of meaning: — that justification implies the root and principle rightly planted, and vitally progressive; while sanctification presents to us the full-grown tree in actual bearing, verifying its own nature, and rewarding the labour bestowed on it.

I adopt this view on the ground of various passages of both Testaments, in which two degrees, both of virtue and vice, are distinctly pointed out; and the term righteous and unrighteous, uniformly used to describe the one, and good, or holy, with various suitable opposites, to designate the other. The plan of climax, which is so much adhered to, in the formation of the Hebrew couplet, suggests this mode of understanding that verse: "The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works;" just as in a preceding verse (Psalm cxlv.), "The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy." The latter clause rises above the other, by the intimation, that even, when justly provoked, God is gracious still; and again, in the next verse (9), "The Lord is good to all; and his tender mercies are over all his works." It is clear more is meant to be said in the second member of the couplet than in the first. But, in fact, this is the favourite figure in Hebrew poetry, as, "O come let us sing unto the Lord; let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation; let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and shew ourselves glad in him with psalms;" as if the very structure of sacred verse were intended to form us to the habit of "leaving first principles, and going on unto perfection." I will just mention a few passages, where this twofold distinction is expressed. "Scarcely for a righteous man would one die; yet, for a good man, some would even dare to die." Here the superiority of the one character to the other is so clearly marked, as to make this passage serve as a



key to many similar ones. For example: "He maketh his sun to shine on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust;" in which words Πονηρός evidently rises above Ἀδίκος, just as Ἀγαθός rises above Δίκαιος. In another passage, I conceive those two classes of evil men are equally marked by other terms. "And, if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly (Ἀσεβής) and the sinner (Ἀμαρτωλός) appear?" which expressions, again, are obviously taken from the septuagint version of the first psalm: "Blessed is the man who hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly (Ἀσεβων), nor stood in the way of sinners (Ἀμαρτωλων)." And, if any thing were wanting to ascertain the intended advance of the terms, the addition here of a third, "the scornful," standing, as it should seem, in direct opposition to St. John's "Fathers in Christ," would put it beyond all question. One more remarkable designation of the selfsame two classes is conveyed in a very different, but, I think, most impressive way, by St. Paul, when he says, "They that sleep, sleep in the night; and they that be drunken, are drunken in the night." Clearly, I conceive, describing, first, a negatively, and, secondly, a positively evil class; consequently, a class corresponding to our Lord's Ἀδικοί, and David's and St. Peter's Ἀσεβεῖς, and a class corresponding to our Lord's Πονηροί, and their Ἀμαρτωλοί.

These may suffice for instances of the double distinction. I shall now quote a text, that I think comes directly to the point in hand, but which



could not have been so distinctly understood without the others. It is Rev. xxii. 11: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still." Whether this remarkable passage be an exhortation to those in the present life, or (as I rather conceive it to be) an intimation of the immutable sealing of the states of men, which is to take place at the last; it most clearly places before us a twofold description, both of the evil and good; and such a one as, whether considered in itself, or in the light of the foregoing quotations, must be understood in the way of climax! He that is filthy must evidently be a worse sort of person than he that is merely not righteous, *Adixan*; and this would indicate, did not even those other passages illustrate it, that the holy man is proportionably a higher character than the righteous man. Now, if you please, turn to the passage in the original, and mark its significant structure: the two first terms, you see, are active participles, joined to verbs of an active sense; the similar endings, as to sound, giving an additional intimation, that the two species are most strictly one genus. Then come two adjectives, decidedly opposed to the two participles; and with the two adjectives are similarly joined two verbs, both in the passive voice, with a like attention to sameness of sound as before. I presume, in no possible way could connexion, gradation, and correspondence, be more strongly and luminously designated.

The literal translation of the passage is evi-

dently this : “ Let him that acts unjustly, act unjustly still ; and let him that acts filthily, act filthily still ; and let him that is just, be justified still ; and let him that is holy, be sanctified still.”

That the first couplet, in both its members, is practical or moral, will not be disputed ; and that the last couplet is in its last member most essentially moral, will equally be allowed. Does it not follow that the remaining member, the first of the second couplet, is moral also ? Yet it is the self-same term which St. Paul every where uses, and which so many divines explain as something done for us, not *in* us. I conceive this scripture alone shakes the basis of their theology.

Even our Calvinist translators do not hesitate to interpret it practically. “ He that is righteous, let him be righteous still.” But if they could not help understanding it morally, that is, as a description of the real inward and spiritual character here, by what consistent rule can it be understood elsewhere, not of what is inward and spiritual, but what is relative and circumstantial ? There is another passage, where our translators, though Calvinists, as I said, have felt a like necessity, I mean in Rom. vi. 7 ; where you may observe they have rendered the same word “ freed,” which, in all other passages of the epistle, they translate by the English-Latin term *justify*. But is it likely that St. Paul would use the same term in the same discourse in any other than the same essential sense ? But if this be not conceivable, then the verb  $\Delta\kappa\alpha\iota\omega$  must be understood every where to have, as in the two last quoted passages, a radically moral meaning,



and to differ from *Αγιάζω* only in that way of gradation which the various passages which have been alluded to, as well as many others which might be adduced, either exemplify or illustrate.

But it may be asked, does not the verb *Δικαιοῶ* much oftener express God's estimate of our character than his operation in our hearts? I answer, it often does express the former, but ever, I conceive, with strict reference to the latter. On this point, exactly, it is that I take my ground against all Calvinist theologists. They think we are *Δικαιοί* by the imputation of what our Redeemer has done in our stead; and they accordingly explain *Δικαιοῶ* of God's favourable reckoning, his acceptance of our persons, on the sole ground of this imputation. I, on the contrary, in conformity with the luminaries of the early church, both Greek and Latin, in concurrence with our own most genuine Church of England divines, and in substantial agreement with that greatest of all dissenting divines, Richard Baxter, conclude that we are then only *Δικαιοί* when the grace of Christ has produced a vital principle of *Δικαιοσύνη* in us, and that God's gracious recognition of this principle, and his rating of us accordingly, is the sole imputative meaning of the verb *Δικαιοῶ*. Such a way of applying it, imputatively, and such only, will accord with the efficient meaning given to it elsewhere. The one, indeed, differing only from the other, as those two closely connected particulars, in the account of the creation, — God said, "Let there be light, and there was light," and "God saw the light that it was good." I mean, God, by his gracious influence, justifies the indi-



vidual, operatively, or makes him righteous; and then by his just and merciful estimate of the work thus wrought, He justifies him imputatively or declaratively, that is, reckons him righteous in virtue of the vital principle which has been wrought in him. The faith spoken of so much, and on which so much stress is laid, in the New Testament, is obviously nothing else than this same principle, or root of good. We are, therefore, most fitly stated to be justified by faith; that is, made righteous through its moral efficacy (the principle involving seminally all the results), and deemed righteous in virtue of it, as a qualification, by Him who reads the heart and sees effects in their cause.

It is strictly this last idea which, I conceive, St. Paul means to insist on, when he speaks of our being justified by faith, without works. Calvinist divines have strangely thought, that by this expression, the Apostle intended to exclude every thing of a moral nature from any share in making us acceptable to God, as our justifier; and have therefore laboured so to explain justifying faith as to give plausibility to that incongruous supposition. That, in such a notion, they utterly mistake St. Paul, is proved by his own express declaration respecting the faith of Abraham, Rom. iv. He enlarges on the case of this illustrious patriarch, as the aptest exemplification which could be adduced of the manner and grounds of our becoming accepted of God; and, instead of shewing any jealousy, like that of his well-meaning followers of later times, he distinctly enumerates some of the most valuable moral qualities that Abraham's faith involved; and

then directly tells us, that "therefore it was reckoned to him for righteousness;" that is, it was reckoned for righteousness, because it was such, essentially and eminently.

But what St. Paul really meant, I conceive, was to ascribe our first admission to God's approbation and favour, to the principle of faith, abstracted from all its outward fruits; that is, he intended to maintain that God accounts us righteous so soon as he finds true and living faith in our hearts, without waiting for any of the results of actual conduct to which faith leads, or, more strictly, with which, if vital, it is pregnant; and, in my mind, no idea could have been more important, more beautiful, or more exquisitely philosophical. His object was to guard the minds of his readers against the dry, selfish, servile, superficial religion of the Jewish Pharisees, which he every where denominates the righteousness of the law, and to lead them effectually from this wretched self-working mechanism, to that vitalising spirit of goodness, that principle of new life and a heavenly nature, which the Gospel was formed to communicate, and of which the Eternal Word, made flesh, was the living source. He, therefore, sets himself to press the acquirement of the simple central principle, without regard, for the present, to any other object. He not only directs them to look for it, to expect it, and to rely upon its efficacy, when obtained, without regard to their own previous character or conduct, whether good or evil; but also with a certain unconcern, even about the duties and virtues which were to follow; not because

these were in any respect of small value, but because they would be far more effectually attained by pursuing them, not immediately, and in themselves, but in the principle which would spontaneously produce them. To all which, as a crowning motive, intelligible to all, he adds this great consideration, that if the favour of God was the object pursued, it was the same vital principle that could alone obtain it: he who was possessed of this, though till then ungodly, and though, perhaps, (like the thief on the cross,) beyond the opportunity of performing one outward act of obedience, being immediately and infallibly accepted.

The wise reason of this is self-evident. If the object of the Gospel be to redeem men from iniquity, and purify a peculiar people, zealous of good works, the divine Author of the plan must ever be looking for these, its solid results; and his gracious pleasure and approbation will be precisely in proportion as those results are realised. If, then, the method by which the divine apparatus works, is, to produce in the heart a vitally influential principle, which, like a soul within the soul, will actuate and guide the whole man, renovate his nature, and, by fixing his supreme love on God and goodness, and his supreme care on what is invisible and eternal, will make him instinctively pure, and spiritual, and godlike:—if this, I say, be the method, this principle must be the thing which God looks for in us, above every thing else, and which, when formed in us, as surely meets his loving approbation, as when he rested and was refreshed in the view of the new-born world.



Such I take to be the nature and grounds; as far as we can trace them, of St. Paul's divine philosophy respecting justification and faith. Very many good people would start back from the view I am giving, as if I were setting up man's righteousness as the term of his acceptance. I well know I could not convince such; but I am unmoved by their objections. For man's righteousness, in St. Paul's sense, is that which man can work for himself, by his own unassisted strength; and God's righteousness is that which he works in us. It was the grand error of the Pharisees, and is still of their followers, to rely upon, and glory in, the one; it is the leading point of the Gospel to call us to, and bless us with, the other; and it is the beautiful characteristic of the evangelic philosophy to effect this result in a way consummately harmonising with all the known laws of nature. A root of vital faith puts forth the main stem of divine love, and this sends forth two collateral stems of sobriety and charity; these three branch into all possible dispositions to goodness, and become clothed, beautified, and enriched with the foliage, the blossoms, and the fruits, of pure and undefiled religion. Surely of this the Prophet spoke when he predicted that the Messiah "should see of the travail of his soul, and should be satisfied;" for what else can satisfy Divine benignity, but the substantial production of that spiritual life, which alone capacitates for that spiritual happiness to which God has destined our nature, and to recover us to which, the Divine nature humbled itself, even to the death of the cross?

I mentioned above, in speaking of Rev. xxii. 11, that the two first descriptions were given *actively*, but the two second *passively*. I then forgot to assign what I conceive the reason ; but it falls in pretty much with some of these last remarks. The first form is used, I think, to shew that the formation of evil characters is man's own unfortunate work on himself ; but the latter form is used to shew that, in what is truly good, we are far more recipients than agents ; that whether we are justified or sanctified, brought effectually out of a state of sin, or confirmed and established in a state of holiness, the excellency of the power is of God, and not of us. First and last, it is God who worketh in us of his own pleasure, both to will and to do.

Little, my good Major, when I began this letter (which has been broken off by illness), did I think of entertaining you with so much theological disquisition ; but I got into it, and I found I could more easily proceed than retreat. Besides, I cannot now regret that you should have an actual document of my thoughts on this long-investigated subject. I attach importance to all I have been saying, on this sole ground, that it appears at once to simplify and spiritualise our view of Christianity. The importance which the Calvinistic theory gives to apprehensions, in themselves speculative, if not in substance fanciful, and certainly intricate, would alone make it desirable to reduce our scheme of thought to the reality and certainty of evangelic truth. But what makes this much more important is, that in this division of attention, as I have already observed, there is perpetual liableness to

neglect the true and infallible sources of comfort, the fountain of living waters, and the well of water continually supplied therefrom in the soul; and to take up with the broken cisterns of empty notions and opinions, which only differ from the old Jewish ceremonies in not having the same venerable origin, and being metaphysical instead of material. On the contrary, the view I have been endeavouring to give, in addition to its agreement with Scripture, has this to recommend it, that it draws all the faculties and powers of the mind, without the slightest divergement, to one point—the new creature, the life hid with Christ in God; it takes the mind at once out of all the thorny mazes of dogmatism, and makes its great object the business, not of the head, but of the heart; it identifies every portion of our comfort with our growth in grace, our tenderness of conscience, our inward and outward walk with God; it sends us from perplexing disquisition to tranquillising prayer: in a word, it gives unity to all our thoughts and purposes, *spirituality* to all our movements and pursuits, and experimental matter-of-fact solidity to all our consolations. As St. Paul assures us that the kingdom of heaven is not meat and drink, so, by parity of reason, is it not dogmatic ratiocination; but, as he proceeds to tell us, it is *Δικαιοσύνη, Ειρήνη και Χάρα εν Πνεύματι αγιω*; and in what order these are attained, Isaiah most beautifully instructs us, “The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever.” To this order, then, it is, and to an exclusive attention to this inward kingdom, that my remarks



would lead the human mind ; for, as St. Paul excellently adds, “ He who, in these things, serveth Christ, is *ευαρεστος* with respect to God, and *δοκιμος* to men.” Observe how that most interesting two-fold gradation of goodness, which I have taken as the key to justification and sanctification, presents itself in the passage just quoted from Isaiah : “ The work of righteousness shall be peace ; ” that is, its immediate result shall be to still “ that troubled sea ” whose waters cast up mire and dirt ; to suppress those wars and fightings which arise within still more surely than without, from those lusts that war in the members. St. James well describes this first consequence of true righteousness (of *η πιστις η ενεργουμενη δι αγαπην*) when he says, “ the wisdom which is from above, is first pure, then peaceable ; ” for there can be no true steady peace without, till there be first peace within ; nor this, again, but through purity ; nor this, but through rightly directed love ; nor this, but through faith of the operation of God. The position of the Prophet, then, is strictly equivalent to that of the Psalmist : “ Great peace have they who love thy law.” But St. Paul adds to peace, the still more perfect and confirmed sentiment, joy ; and, exactly in like manner, Isaiah carries forward the view to a second and more matured result, “ quietness and assurance for ever ; ” a state evidently the same as being “ rooted and grounded in love,” or having that “ perfect love which casteth out fear.” Being described as the *effect*, while the former blessing, peace, is denominated the *work*, of righteousness, it gives the

idea of an advanced stage of the same course as clearly as words could convey it. On this passage of Isaiah, the collect for evening prayer, "O God, from whom all holy desires," is a noble comment. Holy desires, good counsels, and just works, are the first elements of righteousness, and lead to a peace which the world cannot give; but this is not rested in—an heart set to obey God's commandments is aspired to, which is the very essence of sanctification, and brings with it a defence from fear, and the passing of our time in rest and quietness.

I cannot but observe, once more, that the two states of grace are accurately placed before us in two admirable petitions of the Litany. When we pray that it may please God to give us an heart to love and dread him, and diligently to live after his commandments, we evidently implore the very substance and soul of righteousness; and when we ask, further, for "increase of grace, to hear meekly the Divine word, to receive it with pure affection, and to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit,"—what is this but the very essence of sanctification? I do not mean to suppose the compilers had these ideas distinctly in view; I only think they were led to speak thus by obvious bearings of Scripture, as well as by what occurs in general experience.

I beg your pardon for this very long letter. I had no idea of such a one when I began to write. I have only to add, that, while I differ from Calvinists, it is far from my idea to depreciate them; they have had their great use, and may be yet

necessary to modify Christianity for certain sorts and conditions of men, and perhaps to keep up religion at all in the world as it has yet been. I look, however, for better times, and should be happy to accelerate them.

Yours most sincerely and faithfully,

ALEXANDER KNOX.



LETTER TO THE REV DR. WOODWARD ON THE  
CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

MY DEAR DOCTOR,

Dawson Street, March 3, 1809.

My silence may lead you to think me unmindful of you. But it is not so, I assure you. If wishing to write were enough to accomplish the thing, you would have heard from me long since. I felt that I must be exciting doubts in your mind, whether my regard for my friends was not an occasional business, taken up when convenient, and laid down again, like one's hat or gloves. But the truth is, my mind is so occupied from day to day, generally with some chain of thought, that, to sit down and write on any thing but the point in hand, requires a force not easy to be exerted, and, if one will do any thing to purpose, not always right to be exerted. This is the true and simple statement; and, I persuade myself, when it is weighed by so candid a man as yourself, it will be felt, that silence, under such circumstances, may look for pardon, and might even hope to get a line or two now and then, even though nothing should be said in reply. Be it deeply observed, that this is said on no ground of personal pretension to exemption from the common laws of intercourse. No, a simple fact is stated, and a hope is expressed, the hope

resting on nothing but the liberality and kindness of the party addressed, to wit, yourself.

And now, let me say something to you (though I say it) worth your attention. I have long been an uneasy listener to what men say on both sides of what are and what are not the doctrines of the Church of England; and I have asked myself, solicitously, how shall this controversy be settled? particularly, how shall a decisive and satisfactory answer be given to what is brought from the Thirty-nine Articles and the Homilies? A short time since, I have thought of a settling principle, which I now submit to your consideration.

The Church of England adopts one principle, which other branches of the Reformation hold in common with her, that Fundamentals must have Holy Scripture for their basis, and that nothing is, or can be fundamental, which is not to be proved from the Sacred Word. But she also maintains a second principle, peculiar, I believe, in the great reformed body, to herself,—that in elucidating fundamentals, or in deciding secondary questions, relating not to the essence of Christianity, but to the well-being and right-ordering of a Church, the concurrent voice of sacred antiquity, the Catholic rule—*quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*—is, next to Sacred Scripture, our surest guide; and, in the matters to which it is justly applicable, a providentially authoritative guide, nay, more than providentially, rather, where the indication is clear, divinely authoritative, because Christ has said—“Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world.”

That, in ascribing this principle to the Church of England, I say no more than can be maintained, will appear by a quotation from one of the most learned and most liberal of all our divines, than whom no more competent judge could be named in any age—Joseph Mede. “Our Church,” says he, “goes upon differing principles from the rest of the reformed, and so steers her course by another rule than they do. We look after the form, rites, and discipline of antiquity, and endeavour to bring our own as near as we can to that pattern. We suppose the reformed churches have departed further therefrom than needed, and so we are not very solicitous to comply with them. Yea, we are jealous of such of our own as we see over zealously addicted to them, lest it be a sign they prefer them before their mother.”

But, respectable as this assertion is, there is a fact that comes still more home to the point, which is, that the very Homilies, on which the doctrinal men of to-day rely, expressly, and in every instance, appeal to the testimony of the Fathers. This fact needs no proof; to open the Homilies, and turn over one or two leaves, is to be convinced of it. But what does this imply? unequivocally, that, on the points respecting which they appeal to the Fathers, they themselves mean to maintain nothing contrary to that which was maintained by the Fathers. They, doubtless, do not intend to pledge themselves to all and every thing which every one of those whom they quote might have believed; but most certainly, by their method of quoting them, they do take them, concurrently, as their best interpreters



of Scripture, and their next best standard to the text itself; and they do clearly mean, that the theological system which they maintain, is substantially that which was maintained by those whose authority they adduce.

Now, this I take to be in every view a paramount principle. In speaking upon particular points, especially of recent introduction, in their own words they may, being but men, speak incautiously. But here they furnish us with a test whereby to correct themselves. The speaking on an ephemeral topic, was clearly the occasion on which human weakness would shew itself. The adopting venerable antiquity for a standard next to the Divine Word, was a business of deliberation, and had in it all the nature of a permanent principle. I own, therefore, I am obliged to hold, that if, after having thus systematically sent us to the Fathers to find testimonies confirming the doctrines maintained, our Reformers should, in any instance, appear to speak differently from their own solemnly adopted standard, we are bound, by every rule of common sense, to consider the anomalous instance as a mere effect of inattention; one of the "*quas aut incuria fudit*," and to shape our own theological creed by that to which they have so deliberately and uniformly referred us.

In this conclusion, I conceive, we are strengthened by the language they use in particular instances. Thus, in the second page of the First Homily, now lying before me, St. Chrysostom is called that *great clerk* and *godly preacher*. Is this the expression of those who intended to oppose

St. Chrysostom, and to maintain a counter theology? I believe it would be found, that though all the Fathers of note, down to St. Bernard (who lived in the twelfth century, and is accounted the last of the Fathers), are quoted, such a tribute (to theological as well as Christian excellence) is not paid to any one of them. What does this amount to, but that, while they respected St. Basil, St. Ambrose, St. Hilary, St. Augustin, &c. &c., they had some sort of special love for *him* whom they quote first, and honour with these distinguishing epithets?

How different from this the voice of modern Evangelicism! "It would be easy," says Joseph Milner (Hist. vol. ii. p. 302), "to produce abundance of instances of his oratorical abilities: I wish it were in my power to record as many of his evangelical excellences!" Be it observed, this is the sentiment of a zealous stickler for his own notion of the Established Church; but, let any brother of his own say, is his censure of St. Chrysostom in unison, or any way concordant, with the eulogium of the Homily? This is a plain fact, he that runneth may read. Mr. Milner's language is that of Calvinism: the language of the Homily will be owned to be that of our Church. The simple question is, do the two languages bear one character? Mr. Milner might, possibly, have allowed Chrysostom to have been, in some respects, "a godly preacher;" but to call him "a great clerk" is, *ipso facto*, to decide against Calvinism. Mr. Milner's account of him is — "He introduces the doctrine of freewill in the same manner as most of the Fathers did who spoke of it at all, from the

days of Justin ; and observes, that the whole is said to be of God, because the greatest part is ; so hard pressed is he with the plain words of the Apostle, fully opposing the system he had imbibed. But Platonic philosophy had done this mischief to the Church, to the great hurt of Christian faith and humility." Is it a " great clerk " that Mr. M. is speaking of ? would such an application of the title ever once have occurred to him ?

You observe, Mr. Milner speaks of *all* the Fathers from the days of Justin. But his censure refers to the Greek Fathers peculiarly : the Latin Fathers afford him more satisfaction. They do not speak with him. No, not St. Augustin himself ; but they do not speak against him, like the Greek Fathers. In his history, therefore, they are treated accordingly. St. Clement of Alexandria has just five pages ; St. Cyprian, eighty-one ; St. Chrysostom has twenty ; St. Augustin, one hundred and eighty-seven. I mention these, because they are (that is, the two pairs are,) peculiarly on a footing, St. Clement having about the same extent of matter as St. Cyprian, and St. Chrysostom being not a great deal less voluminous than St. Augustin. I am not sure that Cyprian meant to have been a favourite with such writers of a future day. But I am sure that Clement most deliberately and deeply entitled himself to their displeasure. And, undoubtedly, a thorough liking for the opinions of Augustin could not but imply a proportionate disesteem of the doctrines of Chrysostom. Exactly on a like principle, Calvin has recorded his disap-



probation of the Greek Fathers generally. And I remember having read in a history of Jansenism, that when some of the opposers of the Jansenists quoted the Greek Fathers against them, the Jansenists replied by declining their authority; "the Latin Church," they said, "never having been accustomed to seek authorities beyond its own Fathers." This last I only quote to shew that the dislike of doctrinal men to the Greek Fathers has been as steady and as general as an animal instinct.

What, then, is the feeling of the Church of England? Why, in addition to what has been said, it is thus manifested:—When our Reformers were reducing the "Preces ad matutinas" and "ad vespas" into our morning and evening prayer (which you may see called, in the Table of Proper Lessons, by the same old names, as if to register their origin, and shew they were not ashamed of it, *matins* and *even-song*), when they came to the actual *prayers*, which in the old formularies, as in the depurated ones, occupied the last place, they adopted two most noble prayers, as they found them; only improving the language a little, or perhaps taking them from correcter copies; for the morning, "O Lord, our heavenly Father;" and for the evening, "O God, from whom all holy desires." But then, to evince their communion with the Greek, no less than with the Latin Church, they took also two prayers from the Greek formularies; and that they might give to each Church its due honour, the collect from the Greek Church, as the elder sister, stands foremost in the morning service, "O God, the

author of peace;" and, in order not to be unfair to the Latin church, last in the evening, "Lighten our darkness."

If there be then any expressiveness of language in actions the most deliberate, what shall we say to this conduct of the Church of England, especially as contrasted with that of Milner, Calvin, and the Jansenists? Is not the inference inevitable, that the Church of England makes not common cause with dogmatists, and that, in her own judgment, she is neither Calvinian nor Augustinian, but eminently and strictly *CATHOLIC*, and *catholic* only?

I allow St. Augustin is often quoted in the Homilies; but I presume this is only in instances in which that truly great man was himself in harmony with the church; and here, be it observed, St. Augustin gives little aid to modern theology. For instance, in the Homily of Salvation, he is referred to with eleven others, Greek and Latin, in support of our being justified by faith. That here they are fairly appealed to, we may well believe; that is, they all maintain that we are justified by faith. But does any one of them, does Augustin himself, mean by this, what modern theologians and the Christian Observer mean by it? Let Mr. Milner give the answer. "Justification by faith," says he, "doubtless, savingly flourished in Augustin's heart, and in the hearts of many of his followers; yet the precise and accurate nature of the doctrine itself, seems not to have been understood by this holy man; he perpetually understands St. Paul's term to justify of inherent righteousness." Yes, and so



did they all ; all, I mean, who are quoted in the Homilies ; and, in fact, all of any name till the Reformation. But, if this be so, what a very modern thing is that which Mr. Milner reckons the true doctrine ! Does he not himself own this, when he says of Fulgentius in the sixth century, “ I observe that he uses the word to justify in the sense in which Augustin does ; nor does the true idea of the word seem to be recovered by the Christian world till the days of Luther.” But I ask further, if this be so, what then is the doctrine of the Church of England on the subject ? She appeals to twelve Fathers as holding with her. Does she not then mean to hold with them ? How could they support her, if she and they were of different minds ? Yet, says Mr. Milner, the true idea was not recovered till Luther. Why, then, if the Church of England meant to adopt that true idea, does she not rather quote Luther who held it, than the twelve Fathers, not one of whom, according to Mr. Milner himself, held it ? They all laid stress on *inherent righteousness*. And yet the Church of England lays stress on them, and does not, in a single instance, admit the term of imputed righteousness into her formularies or articles. That ambiguous expressions may be found in the Homilies, I allow. But I repeat, are occasional laxities of expression to be set up against so substantial and deliberate a recognition as I have shewn to exist ? I leave the inference to you.

You see I laboured, by close writing, to keep myself within the second sheet ; but I must not quit you so very abruptly. I think you will clearly



see the drift and momentum of what I have been saying. I think you will see that the modern maintainers of an extrinsic justification, cannot so clearly make that out to be a doctrine of the Church of England as they think they can. Nay, rather, I conceive, they must allow the Church to have deemed herself agreeing with those whom she so unequivocally and unconditionally quotes on the subject. And, by strict consequence, not to have deemed herself to hold, what they, her present professing members, hold; to all which, the fact of not admitting the term imputed righteousness adds no little confirmation.

I hope I have, on the whole, made my meaning intelligible; and if I have, I almost think I have made out my case; for what can be more evident than the concurrent judgment of the Fathers as to the sense of the term justification? and what can be more indisputably evinced than the Church of England's agreement respecting justification with the Fathers? But it may be asked, why do expressions occur in the Homilies which would seem to countenance the modern, rather than the ancient views? In order to give a complete answer to such an objection, it would be necessary to examine the expressions particularly. But, without this, I would venture to hazard the opinion, that, though our reformers must have conceived the Fathers to have spoken truth, they might possibly not be satisfied that they had spoken the whole truth. They might have thought, and I dispute not but they would have been right in thinking, that to justify in St. Paul's sense—though never unconnected with in-

herent righteousness—did mean, in some instances, to pronounce righteous, as surely as in other instances it signified to make righteous. And I conceive they might find as clear an example of the former meaning in Rom. viii. 33, as of the latter in Rom. vi. 7, (see margin, or original). For truth's sake, therefore, and no doubt, also, for conciliation's sake, though they would adopt the idea of the Fathers, they would combine with it the other scriptural idea also; that is, they would understand the term as implying God's approbation of his own gracious work in man, as well as his effecting the work; and thus, without adopting any thing but what Scripture warranted, they were enabled to do what they had deeply at heart; namely, to escape the offence which would have been given by their openly opposing the view of justification, maintained alike by Lutherans and Calvinists. But did they, by this procedure, adopt the Lutheran and Calvinist plan? I am confident not; because, with both Lutherans and Calvinists, justification is imputative, and imputative only. But, with our Reformers, it is first efficiency, and then recognition. As in creation, "God said, let there be light, and there was light;" there is efficiency: "And God saw that it was good;" there is recognition.

In sober, solid verity, there never was, except where God himself was pleased to act personally, so good-natured and delightfully wise a system as that of the Church of England. They who have either harshness, or coldness, or acidity, or dryness in their temperament, can no more do justice to it, than (without a miracle) they could do to the



four Gospels. What was done, was wisdom itself. The actors were Cranmer and Ridley ; the former the man of power, the latter the man of business : of power, I mean at court ; of business, I mean in the study. They seem both to have been amazingly formed for these respective purposes ; but even *that* will not sufficiently account for what they accomplished. He who destined them to their work, most evidently guided them in it.

Cranmer's latest scenes would almost persuade one that, instead of being too much, he was too little, if possible, of a dogmatist. His weaknesses were the usual alloy of moderate and nicely discriminative minds. Cicero, the most philosophical of Romans, might be curiously compared with him. But this by the by. To form a church by any sharply defined line, was hardly Cranmer's object : he cordially embraced the central principle of Protestantism (a piety seated in the heart, in alliance with reason and governing conduct) ; but he looked more to extension, than exactness of periphery. A true religion was, no doubt, his first, but a completely national religion was his next, and nearly equal wish. This circumstance seems to me important toward clearly understanding the spirit and plan of our Reformation. Whoever is acquainted with the popular characters of the clerical order just at that period, must know that, had the Reformation been in their hands, it would have been fashioned after the very model of Geneva. Not to revolt these men on the one hand, nor to comply with them on the other, was, doubtless, the principle of Cranmer. He would not revolt them,



because he dreaded offence abroad, and schism at home ; he would not comply with them, both because he had not the same antipathy to the old religion, and because he wished to conciliate its adherents.

The policy of Cranmer (fair as it may be right to deem it) was liable to have defeated itself, through its very want of decision, had not Ridley been at hand to execute what the other aimed at, and to draw a definite line, where his principal would have been apt to shift his ground. Whatever, therefore, in our formularies, bears the characters of method, exactness, precision, terseness, elegance, philosophy, or Catholicity, I am inclined to ascribe to the admirable Ridley. Whatever, in our Articles especially, or in the first Book of Homilies, would not be laid hold of by dogmatists as countenancing their views, I think likely to have been the work of Cranmer, or done under his direction. Ridley was conciliatory as really as Cranmer, but within stricter limits, as his resistance to Hooper about the episcopal vestments made pretty evident. He was, no doubt, the very man to arrange all that regarded public worship ; but, in the articles, his correctness might not have answered so well as the comparative vagueness of Cranmer.

“ Sudden changes,” said Ridley, “ without necessary cause, and the heady setting forth of extremities, I did never love.” What a sentiment is here ! and how wonderfully does this incomparable principle appear to have been acted on in all that we can suppose him concerned in ! No

doubt he advised in the Articles, and there is no room to suppose that the two reformers did not exactly think alike on all points of doctrine and practice. But, if either or both had been merely declaring their own sentiments, it might, most probably, have been done in other language than occurs in the doctrinal articles. As it is, does any thing in them really contradict what I have now been remarking? I will leave others to settle this question in its general bearing, and confine myself to the one point—justification by faith. Here, if I am right in supposing a conciliatory policy at work, the point has been gained; for the Church has been deemed to speak on this subject exactly with Luther and Calvin. I humbly conceive she does not. They, if I mistake them not, make faith merely the instrumental medium, whereby the righteousness of Christ is so apprehended, as to give peace to the conscience. “The gift of righteousness,” (*i. e.* imputed righteousness), says a Mr. Cooper, praised in the “Christian Observer,” “is offered to all. Faith is the hand which receives, applies, and appropriates the gift.” What says the article? “We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our own works or deservings.” Now, I grant this may, for want of attention, sound well in dogmatical ears. But a question arises: what place does faith hold in our being accounted righteous before God? It holds some place, or it would not be here, yet not the place assigned by Mr. Cooper; for, what has a hand receiving a gift, to do with our being accounted





LETTER TO DR. WOODWARD ON THE CENTRAL  
CHARACTER OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

MY DEAR DOCTOR,

Bellevue, January 6th, 1812.

You might almost conclude that I meant, by my silence, to reprove you for making me pay double postage. But that is far from being the case. There are few expenditures which I make with more pleasure than those for letters from persons I regard. And I never think of little matters. Write to me, therefore, when you can. And care nothing, I pray you, whether it be double or single.

I was occupied in rather a long letter to an English barrister, who is also a dissenter, and yet likes to hear all I have to say. These are calls to which I like to yield. Who knows what may be done, by even scattering here and there the seeds of truth? My opportunities must be such, or none; for, were I to write to the public, my reward would be, "*Deferor in vicum vendentem thus et odores.*" As Prior says,

" Could I my remarks sustain,  
Like Socrates, or Miles Montaign,  
Who in these times would read my books,  
But Tom O'Stiles, or John A'Nokes?"

The avocation just mentioned, with others, occurring at this time (Christmas holidays), in this place (Bellevue), have alone prevented my thanking you for so kindly remembering your promise. I know you are capable of *observing*. And be the things observed pleasant or unpleasant, I am glad to receive an authentic report. In truth, it is the height of folly not to look things in the face. There is not one of us whom correct apprehension of things as they are, may not serve, if it were only (*only*, do I say ?) in the warning thus given to ourselves, individually, to have both our minds and hearts in readiness for whatever may happen ;—our minds, by being established in solid truth,—our hearts, by being possessed of that vital piety, which, like the ark, no deluge can submerge. If there ever were times, since the influx of the barbarians in the fifth century, which called for these resources, the present times are such. I am ready to think, almost, that we are witnessing the commencement of that general concussion predicted in Haggai, ii. 6, and quoted by St. Paul (Heb. xii. 26). And, if so, what can be our consolation for the destiny allotted to us, but that mentioned in the 28th verse of the same chapter,—an interest in the kingdom, “which cannot be shaken.” This will more than indemnify us ; it will make us feel exactly what our Lord has warranted in his true followers looking forward, probably, to these very times : for to the season now commencing, I am strongly persuaded he alludes in St. Luke, xxi. 28. Observe, I pray you, the foregoing verses ; and mark the contrast between the horrific images in the 25th and 26th

verses, and the vernal scenery in the 29th verse. The striking circumstance is, that no actual change takes place. The difference lies in the feelings of those who witness the events; and to whom, according to their respective characters, the movements which they behold, are either the desperate close, or the delightful opening, of their supreme hopes.

Doubtless, in the substance of this consolation, every good man will have his share. But, if I do not misunderstand the indications of Providence, there never was a time in which wisdom, or the want of it, will tell more for, or against, individuals, than in the probably impending season. In order to be as perfect as God would clearly have us to be, two properties are indispensable — right inclination and wise direction. Right inclination, be it ever so decided, is but the pondus of the moral machine. In order to regular movement, a pendulum must be added; and what is this, but wisdom? that is, a competent and rightly digested knowledge of truth. Our Lord so settles the matter in that short, but infinitely pregnant oracle, “God is a spirit; and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth.” Here we have exactly the pondus and the pendulum; spirit or right inclination, the former; right, or wise direction, the latter.

Now, I own it strikes me, that what has been done hitherto, in ostensible religious movements (church establishments excepted), has had much more to do with right inclination, than wise direc-



tion. Sincerity has been tried—fortitude has been called forth—faith and patience have been exercised. But, as yet, there has been little elicitation of wisdom; and, therefore, the pious persons called evangelical at this day, have little, if any more knowledge of truth, than the immediate disciples of John Calvin, or of John Husse, or, I might almost say, than the Waldenses. I speak not this in the way of blame. I humbly conceive the providential training of these persons has led to little more. They have had trials of their strength, but not of their mind. They were called to encounter brute violence, rather than serpentine sophistry. Their sufferings have answered their purpose. Every thing which mere faith and patience could achieve, has been exemplified. But I imagine other trials will be necessary for training to wisdom. And it is this mental dispensation which I suppose now probably about to open.

Divine wisdom has used the blind zeal of superstition (of which intolerance is the certain attendant) for training to fortitude and sincerity. Is it unreasonable to suppose that scepticism and infidelity may now be similarly used for training to wisdom? “Out of the mouth of very babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength, because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.” This, I think, describes the dispensation which has hitherto subsisted every where but in establishments. But the Church must not always be a nursery; even though of infants, which, like the fabled Hercules, strangled serpents

in their cradle. Sagacity must be called forth, as well as sincerity; and the stage must, I humbly conceive, be prepared for the new exercise.

Of the scepticism which will be overruled to this high purpose, I take the present religious unsettledness in England to be a very natural prelude. I am ready to say, what can it end in, but scepticism? while all are contending with the others, none seems to me to know what he himself maintains. And even the contending zeal is, in most instances, strangely mingled with a qualifying spirit, as if each party were conscious of weakness, though it could not be sure of the weak point, and would therefore retouch and re-edify, wherever it could. The dissenters proceed thus, in the "Eclectic Review;" the evangelics, in the "Christian Observer," and their still newer engine, the "British Review." And I am sorry to say that the "British Critic," with the best meaning, has too much of the same erratic character. In opposing Calvinism it seems sometimes to throw away catholic verity.

I suspect all this is but the beginning of troubles, because I see no rallying point in view. Some individuals have more light than others; but there is no master mind to take a powerful lead, and check the aberrations by demonstratively indicating some one sure ground, of which it would be obvious wisdom to take possession.

I know nothing settled, in the whole reformed body, but the Liturgy of the Church of England. I do not add the Articles, not because I have any real quarrel with them, but because they have not, in any respect, the same intrinsic authority.



Their force arises chiefly, if not solely, from convention. They that have subscribed them are bound to them; but, to all others, they are but the sentiments of respectable men themselves, requiring the support of some more authoritative sanction. Not so the Liturgy. This has so stood the test of time, as to bear on its front the stamp of overruling Providence. It is, virtually, the transcript of what the Church has said, in its converse with God, from the very earliest period. It is, verbatim, what the Church has been repeating, without deviation or alteration, from the sixth century. "Lo I am with you alway," said the Great Head; and especially "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I, in the midst of them." Were these words vainly spoken? *Μη γενόιστο!* Allow, then, full weight to these words, and conceive the authority now attaching to the solemn forms of converse with this ever-present Patron and King, unaltered by his ever-working, irresistible Providence, through, at the least, twelve centuries; and preserved by nothing but Providence to us, considering the hazards of that crisis which they passed through, in becoming our special inheritance.

In the view of these impressive circumstances, *can* I estimate our Liturgy as merely human? Does God speak to us only by his word? Does he not convey his mind by his works also? And those works, if clear, are surely *authoritative*. "He," says Bacon, "who bringeth in *evil* things, resisteth the will of God, revealed in his *word*; and he who bringeth in *new* things, resisteth the will of God,



revealed in *things themselves*. Therefore, take counsel of the *providence* of God, as well as of his *word*." If this luminous sentiment has any truth in it, to what case could it be applied with the same justice, as to the preserving, to the Catholic Church generally, and the far more wonderful preserving to our Church, in particular, that form of sound words contained in the Liturgy.

Of what, then, is the Liturgy a standard? I hesitate not to say, of doctrine as well as of devotion. It is impossible that any doctrinal article, at once true and important, could be omitted in so copious and so diversified a collection of solemn addresses to God, formed, as they self-evidently were, by some mind, which had studied (we may well believe in the laboratory of experience) both the first elements and most mature results of Christian piety. "Il ne faut pas s'imaginer," says excellent Nicole, "qu'il n'y ait tradition que pour les dogmes speculatifs. Il'y a aussi tradition pour les verités de pratique. Et entre celles-la, il n'y en a point de plus marquée, de plus certaine, ni de plus vivante, que celle des prières." To this (as far as our prayers go) what good man could hesitate to assent? But, if so, must not our entire collection, considering their number and variety, imply a body of practical theology, in which nothing can be wanting, which is material; and along with which, nothing that is contrarious can be legitimately admitted?

Here, then, amid the present war of theological elements, in due subordination to the sole word of God, I fearlessly fix my foot. In the Liturgy, and

in that exclusively, I seem to myself to find the *DECUS et TUTAMEN* (under God and his Christ) of the Anglican Church; its citadel and its temple in one, as far as any visible institution can be such. As I have said above, I have no quarrel with the Articles. I do not think they are perfect. I could wish some expressions in them altered, were it possible; but that being impossible, I submit to that which I regard the appointment of Providence. I have the same submission to exercise respecting some of the added parts of the Liturgy, particularly in the Communion Service; the departure of which, from the first prayer-book of Edward VI., I could cordially regret, were I not both rationally and religiously convinced that all was ordered by an higher hand; and, of course, in the way fittest for the destined purpose. But, even in those modern arrangements themselves, I feel, on the whole, more pleasure than pain; because, though in some instances excellence has, in my mind, been lessened, inconsistency or contradiction has been so escaped, as to evince the guidance that presided. It was not in man to have steered so safely through such rocks and quicksands. In the Articles particularly (because there the greatest temptation lay), I am astonished at the temperance of wisdom which almost every where manifests itself. I think, if some of their eulogists studied them more impartially, they would be less fond than they are of giving them an undue pre-eminence. What Cranmer thought, I know not, and I am not very anxious to know: but of this we are assured, that the good Ridley would no more have dreamed of

putting conceptions of his, on the same authoritative footing with the concurrent sense of the Catholic Church, handed down unchanged through eleven centuries, than he could have thought of aspiring to the Popedom.

But clear as this fact is, what we have chiefly to look to is, the *principle* on which their work was done. Their private sentiments were not, we may suppose, any peculiar charge of Providence, further than was necessary for their work. What they were to guard or settle for after ages, was the main point. Here, therefore, and not in the common every-day expressions of their thoughts, we are to look for the authoritative part of their conduct. The Roman Catholics may teach us here. It is not the mere talk of the Pope, to which even the Tramontanes would give deference; but it is to what he pronounces, as visible head of the church, *ex cathedrâ*. He is, to their apprehension, a mere man in the former case. But it is the opinion of papal advocates, that the infallible guidance of God may be relied on in the latter case. We have here, I think, a grand principle exaggerated, and, at least in point of extent, grossly misapplied. My belief of Divine Providence, however, does not allow me to suppose even the Pope, in any material instance, left solely to himself: Caiaphas prophesied! This principle, then, soberly understood, I apply to our Reformers, acting as such; and in what they did, as reformers, I recognise that providential direction, which alone gives rational authority to their decisions. In what, then, are they most decisive? In asserting, though in strictest



subordination to Scripture, the authority of the Catholic Church, so far as it was discoverable in the *consensus omnium*. They were led, in this primary instance, as in all subordinate arrangements of importance, to adopt a medium between the Protestants and the unreformed Church. They did not, with the former, make the Catholic Church an unincorporated convention, acting only *pro rebus natis*, but competent to establish nothing; nor, with the unreformed, did they recognise that assumed right which would make each successive set of ecclesiastical functionaries as infallible, and, consequently, as authoritative, as the concurrent aggregate of their predecessors. They rejected alike the moral anarchy contained in the one principle, and the mental slavery imposed by the other; they claimed a right of judging, but they acknowledged a practical decisive standard whereby to judge; believing that God had not only enlightened his church at the first, but had led it, subsequently, according to his promise, into all necessary truth, they felt themselves bound, while they listened implicitly to all that was expressly said in the divine word, to be humbly and wisely attentive to all after-indications of the divine superintendence. This, they thought, could not have been wanting, where concurrence, not only of all, at any given time, but of all, through the whole succession of the Church, was clearly manifest.

They, accordingly, did not hesitate to adopt the formula called after St. Athanasius, though in that creed the two authorities are distinctly recognised; that of Holy Scripture, and that of the *consensus*

*omnium*; “for,” says the creed, “like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every person by himself to be God and Lord, so are we forbidden by the Catholic religion to say there be three Gods, or three Lords.” What is the Christian verity, but the clear sense of Holy Scripture? and what the Catholic religion, but the concurrent judgment or tradition of the Church, the *consensus omnium*? the *quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus*?

To the force of this simple, but powerful fact, there can be but one ground of opposition; viz. that this creed was taken in by wholesale; and that, therefore, they who adopted it are not to be bound by its detail. To this I answer, that this creed could not have been adopted by wholesale; because, in a particular instance, where the Reformers disapproved of it, they altered it. This has not been (to my knowledge) observed. It is a fact, however, and a curious one; for it both shews, in general, how wittingly they proceeded; and it confirms, in particular, the remainder of this formula as *exceptio probat regulam in non exceptis*; so may we equally say that alteration, made in any one instance, sanctions all that remains unaltered. The change in the creed occurs in the last sentence: “This is the Catholic faith, which, except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved.” The words in the Latin formula are *fideliter, ac firmiter*. Our Reformers omitted *ac firmiter*, in order that they might confine the condemnation to presumptuous rejection, and pass no sentence on intellectual vacillation.

Let any one, who would still dispute my conclusion, read that preface to the Common Prayer Book, which is entitled, "Concerning the Service of the Church." In this he will hear the Reformers declaring for themselves how strictly they meant to adhere to the sentiments and practice of "the old Fathers:" the disputation at Oxford gives further and conclusive evidence of systematic respect for this secondary standard. Why did Ridley so laboriously fight his way through the apparent enginery brought against him from the Fathers by the arts of those who opposed him, when he could at once have appealed from the Catholic Church to the written word? Cranmer, when hard pushed on one occasion, shewed such a disposition; but Ridley, never. Would not this wise and honest man have rested every thing on Scripture alone, at that moment, especially, when he was making his last and most solemn confession, if he had not been withheld by principle, his own, and that of the Church of which he had been the second in command, and the first in influence?

Where, then, have we that which our Reformers were led by Providence to recognise as the Catholic Religion? we have it in the ancient parts of our Liturgy. Than, in these, there cannot be, in the same magnitude, a more perfect exemplification. It contains every thing essential to Catholic theology, set forth in terms the most simple, luminous, and impressive; nothing deficient, nothing superfluous; and even in the new work, which was built in by our Reformers, to repair decay, or meet urgent necessity of the times,



nothing contradictory. At this last, as I said above, I wonder, and can not otherwise account for it but by the supposition already made, of an overruling direction.

To the Liturgy, then, on all these grounds, I adhere, as the golden chain, which binds us, or rather as that silver cord (for so Solomon calls the spinal marrow) which unites us to the great mystical body; other parts of our constitution (such as superadded prayers and the Thirty-Nine Articles) were no doubt seen to be expedient, especially considering the middle point we were to occupy; and (I trust) the conciliatory function to be one day exercised by us. But our vitality as a Church consists in our identity of organisation, and of mental character with the Church Catholic: and as our unbroken episcopacy implies the first, our Liturgy, and that alone (because an actual effluence of "the catholic religion"), contains the other.

I, therefore, consider our Liturgy as the pledge of our continuity as a Church. But, being possessed by two national churches, it does not, of necessity, imply the continuance of both, because one may be sufficient for the retention of the treasure. You will judge for yourself, which of the two churches exhibits, on the whole, the most long-lived aspect.

If there be truth in my remarks, they tend to this, that our calling, as Church-of-England men, is to have both our minds and hearts in unison with our Liturgy; and that, if we need further light, (always in due subordination to the Holy Scripture), we are on every principle of common

sense, to go to the rock whence our Liturgy was hewn, and the hole of the pit whence it was digged; that is, to the ancient divines, of whose theology our Liturgy cannot but be a compendium and a record, not authentic merely, but identical.

When I began, I had no intention of thus taxing your patience. Having written it, I'll send it; and let me beg you to go over it more than once, and judge whether I have, or have not, made out my point, which is to ascertain the central character of the Church of England, and the true rallying point of its honest cordial members.

Believe me, always,

My dear Doctor,

Most sincerely and faithfully yours,

ALEXANDER KNOX.

LETTER TO MRS. HANNAH MORE, SHEWING THE  
THEOLOGY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT NOT TO  
BE CALVINISTIC.

MY DEAR MADAM,

1807.

Not many days after the receipt of your very kind letter, of the 21st of January, I sat down to write to you; and had proceeded to some length, when I found myself so completely in an essay,\* rather than a letter, that, both for your sake and my own, I thought it advisable to stop where I was. I could not transmit a fragment; and some pressing calls to do a variety of things for a variety of persons, making up a miscellany, not very unlike "Cowper's Newspaper," have only just now left me at liberty to follow my own wishes.

I read, with sincere satisfaction, your approbation of what I said respecting the hints in the "Eclectic Review." What I wrote had small title to be considered as a review at all. It was merely a saying something, by way of doing justice to you, of adding to the circulation of the work, and of vindicating efficient piety. On this last topic, the sequel in the next, as no doubt you have seen, chiefly turned; but there I fought behind the

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\* Vide unfinished Letter of the date of 27th December, 1806.



shield of Ajax ; Smith, Cudworth, and Taylor, being such a phalanx as might turn their most cowardly ally, almost, into a hero. I had to regret, that some changes of words (whether through inadvertence, or a wish to make me better, I know not) made me, toward the very close, a little unintelligible ; but you made me out, some way or other ; and, I hope, you found nothing in my one or two strictures, which seemed exceptionable, considering the position I occupied.

They wish me to give further aid, but I find it impracticable. Kempis says, "easy businesses are hard to the weak," and I truly feel it to be so. I am often so indisposed to mental labour, from prevalent biliousness, that much of my time passes unoccupied, except in thought ; which, happily, may be pursued by him who rests on a sofa, or walks backward and forward in his room ; and, if it be winged thought, of the *Sursum Corda* kind, it is neither an unpleasant nor unprofitable employment, though even this will suffer no little, when indisposition becomes oppressive. There is still, however, I trust, a peace which lives throughout all storms of lower nature ; and which, where we are not wanting to ourselves, will make even our more painful hours like rainy weather in the spring. But I am rambling. What I was going to say, is, that the little applicable strength which remains to me after all drawbacks, I conceive I may be able to use more to my own satisfaction, than by writing in a review, when I have no special motive ; and where my sentiments must appear in company with opinions, which, whether right or wrong, are dis-

similar to mine, both in theological and ecclesiastical matters.

In my judgment there is, at this day, one great controversy, which calls for all our mental strength and wisdom; that is, whether Christianity be a sickly and painful struggle at best (for there are many who place it much lower still), or a healthful and happy principle? Whether it be a thing to be merely talked, and written, and preached about, or also (and much rather) to be felt within, in attractions, influences, and energies, which designate themselves to the subject of them, by marks as unequivocal as they are consolatory? This, you see, I chiefly dwelt upon in my review of the hints; and I soberly think it is the point to be at this day contended for, with as much interest as the man in the parable felt for his lost sheep, or the woman for her piece of money. The king of Syria's command to his generals, when they were going out against Ahab and Jehoshaphat, seems to me to apply here, "Fight neither with small nor great, but with the King of Israel."

Your letter, now lying before me, presents to me, within the compass of three pages, the Edinburgh reviewers, and your friend, the learned clergyman. You have not brought them into immediate contact, but have put between them the excellent Archbishop. And could they live on your pages as they do in the world, this interposition would be wise and necessary, in order to prevent their falling foul of one another. I dare say they would be as hostile to each other as the

Greeks and Trojans ; yet, wherein do they substantially differ ? The one catches at a nutshell, and contends for it as for his life ; while the others are so disgusted at the folly of him, and such as he is, that they conclude there is nothing but nutshell in the whole matter, and, therefore, take no other concern than to laugh at the fools who are so anxious about a shadow, or to lash the knaves who contrive to turn that shadow into the substance of emolument and dignity.

To meet both Pharisees and Sadducees, we must do what we can to bring into view the very kernel itself, freed from all its husky integuments ; and when this is rightly done, it will be seen, that genuine Christianity is that centre where intellect, judgment, taste, interest, prudence, principle, the firmness of the Stoic, the elevation of the Platonist, the tranquillity of the Epicurean, the archetypal realities, to which all earthly objects, in the shape of pleasure, profit, or honour, correspond, as gilded clouds do to the sun, — all meet, and is, of course, that identical chief good, which human nature, so soon as its higher faculties have, at any time, come into action, has invariably panted after, and which the wisest sages have so agreed in describing, that even by their marks alone, we might be satisfied of its genuine existence in the Gospel.

In endeavours to do this justice to our holy religion, we have many noble aids. Baxter, whatever your friend may think of him, is a first-rate workman in such a process as I speak of ; perhaps, on the whole, the first the world has yet seen. Sir Matthew Hale also has done



invaluable service, particularly in his "Victory of Faith over the World," his "Wisdom of fearing God," and his "Discourse of Religion." The Cambridge men of the seventeenth century are also our "great and good allies," if I may employ a phrase not a little abused; and amongst these, in an eminent degree, Smith and Cudworth. Lucas, of a later day, is not to be forgotten; but of this class of writers (meaning the Cambridge men, Lucas, and such like) Chrysostom appears to me the patriarch. I do indeed think that, since the departure of St. John, no man ever possessed more sublime views of the dignity and happiness of Christianity than he. If Leighton had been less melancholy and not Calvinistic, he would have been the nearest to Chrysostom in spirit, though not at all like him in mode of expression.

I have so very weak a memory, that I cannot be sure whether I am not saying what I may have said again and again; nor do I remember whether I ever gave you a specimen of Chrysostom's mode of speaking. At any rate I will do it now, being pretty sure, at least, that the passage will be new to you. I copy it from what I take to be a Port Royal translation. It is the beginning of one of those exhortations with which he always concludes his lectures on Scripture. He had been speaking on the wise men from the East.

"Travaillons donc sérieusement, mes frères, à bannir de notre esprit ces deux vices, l'envie et la tiédeur, celui qui les veut combattre doit être plus brûlant que le feu. C'est pourquoi Jesus Christ a dit, 'Je suis venu apporter un feu sur la terre, et

que desirai-je sinon qu'il s'allume ? C'est aussi pour ce sujet que le St. Esprit parût en forme de feu. Et après cela, néanmoins, nous demeurons plus froids que la cendre, et plus insensibles que les morts. Nous ne sommes point touchés en voyant le bienheureux Paul s'élever au dessus du ciel, et passer même le ciel du ciel, voler plus vite qu'une flamme, vaincre tous les obstacles qui se présentent à lui, et se mettre au-dessus du ciel et de l'enfer, du présent et de l'avenir.

“ Si ce modèle est trop grand pour vous, c'est une marque de votre lâcheté. Car qu'a eu St. Paul plus que vous, pour croire qu'il vous soit impossible de l'imiter ? Mais pour ne point disputer de ceci, laissons St. Paul à part, et jettons la vue sur les premiers Chrétiens. Considérez de quelle manière ils ont vécu, et nous trouverons qu'ils ont quitté leurs biens et toutes les occupations de la vie, et qu'ils se sont donnés tout entiers à Dieu, méditant sur sa parole durant le jour et durant la nuit.

“ Car le feu du S. Esprit ne souffre point que la personne qu'il enflamme désire aucune chose de tout ce qui est dans le monde ; mais il nous porte à un autre amour. C'est pourquoi celui qui suivait ses passions et ses désirs deviendra prêt tout d'un coup à donner tout ce qu'il possède ; à mépriser la gloire, à quitter les délices, et même à exposer sa vie s'il est nécessaire ; et il fera tout cela avec une facilité merveilleuse, parce que lorsque l'ardeur de ce feu est entrée dans l'âme de quelqu'un, elle en chasse toute la froideur et toute la lâcheté. Elle la rend plus légère que n'est un

oiseau, et lui donne un mépris général de toutes les choses presentes."

That there should be some excess in a Father of the fourth century is not extraordinary; or rather, perhaps, it could not be otherwise. But is there not something very noble in these passages? And what higher evidence could we have of the excellency and energy of our blessed religion, than that, at a time when intellect was sinking more and more, and the human mind had fallen into unexampled languor, the spirit of the devoted Christian should be thus heroical, and his unstrained, spontaneous language thus eloquent? In point of talent, however, it must be allowed that Chrysostom stands very high; still, talent alone would scarcely, at any time, and much less at that time, have furnished such glowing expressions. It is, obviously, the subject which raised the mind of the speaker; which, happily, was a mind as capable of being raised as any, probably, that ever resided in a merely human bosom.

Still, however (as, perhaps, you may remember to have heard from me already), I consider Austin to have had his great department in the Church, as well as Chrysostom; nor do I think that the superstructure of the one could be upheld or accomplished without the deep foundation of the other. Austin, I conceive, was the great teacher of efficient grace, Chrysostom of consummate holiness (consummate, I mean, with regard to the Gospel standard). I do not intend to say, that no one can attain to Chrysostom's heights, without first actually descending to Austin's depths. Because this evi-



dently was not the case with Chrysostom himself, nor with our Cambridge friends, or Lucas ; nor has it, I imagine, hitherto (except in rare instances) taken place (at least in any striking degree), where, through God's blessing on early education, religion has so grown with a person's growth, as to prevent wilful deviations. But my idea is, that in order to such a conversion as should rise to full grown holiness, Chrysostom, excellent as he is himself, both in urging and exemplifying the latter, could not be a successful labourer, without an alliance with Austin. I even think further, that there is no case, in which the want of this alliance, either of Chrysostom with Austin, or of Austin with Chrysostom, does not imply comparative loss, and of consequence, the realising of this alliance induce invaluable benefit.

I am inclined to think, however, that this alliance is, as yet, very much a desideratum. Baxter has more of it than any one I know in the Christian world, except one, whom to you I may venture to name ; I mean John Wesley ; a man of many errors and foibles, innocent ever, I am confident, as to himself, but far from harmless to his followers ; yet still, I conceive, he hit astonishingly, or rather he was wonderfully led to, the union of grace with holiness of which I speak. But he has not left what he actually did accomplish, in a state for general use. On the contrary, though the pure kernel is there, it is so enveloped in cortical integuments, some of no pleasing appearance, that there must be attention and discrimination to come at it. Still, in my opinion, it is there, in a more

complete form than I have ever met it elsewhere ; and, therefore, I have been always as desirous to take from John Wesley lessons for myself, as I have been cautious of leading others to an indiscriminate perusal of his writings.

But, whether I am right or wrong in my opinion of J. Wesley, certain it is, that, in general, the alliance I speak of has not taken place. Chrysostom, hitherto, has had his disciples, and Austin has had his ; and both classes have, for the most part, exhibited the defects as well as excellences of their respective masters. The great advocates for efficient grace having been too generally anti-perfectionists ; and the perfectionists being, on the other hand, too little aware that we are not sufficient so much as to think any thing as of ourselves, but that it is God that worketh in us of his own good pleasure, both to will and to do. Or rather, indeed, they have failed in those deep feelings of human depravity and human weakness, which men in general need to be brought to before they will aim at a radical change ; which radical change, however, is the only substratum upon which the fabric of holiness can be erected. I do not, however, consider the deficiency on either side so much a matter of blame as a fact which grew, almost of necessity, out of existing circumstances. The minds of men have not yet been sufficiently expanded to embrace both the views in their fullness ; therefore, Providence seems to have ordered that there should be two sets of workmen ; (and I am strongly inclined to think, that it is to this we are to refer what is said of the two witnesses in the

Apocalypse). Yet this, after all, is an imperfect state of things ; and, doubtless, if apter circumstances are now rising in the world, there will be a suitable adjustment to those circumstances, of the means of spiritual happiness. Such an adjustment, then, I think, would be the alliance of which I speak.

If you yourself do not aim at this, you surely come very near it. All I used to think you wanted was to be a more zealous perfectionist. You know I used this term always in talking with you on the subject, and therefore I use it now. And I own at all times I love a strong word which has no compromise in it. Besides, to say nothing of what is in Scripture, the accomplished Lucas has made perfection a classical term,—classical, I mean, in English divinity. But it is the thing after all, not the word, which I am solicitous for. It is the state of mind, which Chrysostom urges in the above passage ; which John Smith sublimely describes throughout his book, but with peculiar clearness in his first treatise (just at the conclusion of the 2d section, p. 16 of my edition) ; which Lucas expatiates on with delightful vivacity, but I wish I could say with steady consistency ; and which, I add with pleasure, Doddridge, less professedly, but not less cordially, has both taught and exemplified (as I think will appear fully on carefully reading the 20th and 26th chapters of his “ Rise and Progress,” &c., and the 7th section of the 8th chapter of his *Life by Orton*, especially the concluding paragraph of a letter from “ another friend who had informed him of some reports to the disadvantage of his character.”)



To the union of which I speak, obstacles oppose themselves on more sides than one. Formal pharisaic religiousness is perhaps not a great deal more against it than that metaphysical divinity which deems itself evangelical. For as knowledge is just as independent of the heart as legal observances, a doating on the former has, of necessity, life in it no more than superstitious scrupulousness about the latter. Indeed, I ought rather to say that metaphysical divinity is the chief hinderance, as this obtains in the next region, and arrests and detains those who would be most likely to advance to the point of excellence, were they not thus entangled. More and more do I see, that a mind accustomed to draw comfort from doctrines, is as much averted from high spiritual pursuits, as they who number their beads before a crucifix, too generally, may be supposed to be to spirituality itself. I found it necessary to modify my language in this latter member of the sentence, at the cost of awkwardness, as I felt that the aversion was likely to be much stronger in the metaphysical than in the ceremonious devotee. But the truth is, that so deceitful is the human heart, and so natively averse to spiritual self-denial, that so long as man can lay any kind of flattering unction to his soul, he will avoid the severity of selling all for the pearl.

Certainly I do consider the too common method of stating justification to depend so wholly on our blessed Saviour's merits, as to rest in no respect on moral qualities in us, to be the grand error of the present religious world. When a man believes, with Mr. Cooper and his reviewer in the Christian

Observer (1824, p. 289), that the justification of a sinner has “no connexion with his own personal obedience, either to the moral or the ceremonial law;” and that even “his future obedience,” being at the best imperfect, must, consequently, for ever be excluded from the office of “justifying:”—when a man, I say, believes thus, and makes this theory the ground of his daily comfort, how can he but take refuge in it from the innumerable misgivings of mind, which little self-indulgences in temper and conduct produce, through the day? And if he does thus take refuge in it, is not the absolute necessity of correcting them, in order to his comfort, thereby done away? He may still value holiness in some degree, for he cannot do otherwise, if he be at all in a state of grace; but, probably, deeming high degrees of holiness unattainable, and certainly thinking them not absolutely essential to his safety, can he well be other than that struggling, staggering kind of Christian which Mr. Newton describes (as the ordinary Christian character!!) in the very second Letter of his *Cardiphonia*?

It may be said, is not the above-mentioned view (which Mr. C. and the Christian Observer maintain) the doctrine of St. Paul? I conceive it is not. I think St. Paul puts the matter on a ground utterly inconsistent with such a theory. His strongest argument for justification by faith, is the case of Abraham; and, in stating this case, he uses the utmost care to shew that Abraham's faith involved in it the very noblest moral qualities (Romans, iv. 18—21). And having enumerated these, he

expressly adds, "and, therefore, it was imputed to him for righteousness." What is this but to assert, that because the patriarch's faith was, in its very nature, the essence of all genuine righteousness, the happy possessor of it could not fail to be accepted of Him who need not wait for outward proofs, inasmuch as he reads the heart. The works then, in my judgment, that St. Paul excludes from our justification, are self-wrought works, such as man can perform by his own natural power (all which he wholly depreciates, and accounts dross); and, also, all outward works, as of previous necessity, the plan of divine mercy being to accept every one, however, till then, ungodly, in whom that right disposition of heart, called faith, comes into existence. But this is foreign from the idea, that faith itself is not tried by any moral standard, nor appreciated as a moral quality; St. Paul's language, just referred to, distinctly and unequivocally maintaining the direct contrary.

But is not this the doctrine of the Church of England? I hope not; for if it could be shewn that the Church held what St. Paul contradicts, it would, I conceive, be, sooner or later, a millstone about the Church's neck. But I more and more admire how the English Establishment has been preserved from dangerous dogmas, while, one would think, it was impossible to escape them. I soberly think her Articles (in which she advances toward her Protestant brethren of other churches, and, as it were, gives them her left hand, while, in her Liturgy, she holds up her right hand to heaven,) contain a series of hair-breadth 'scapes, on every



one of which occasions she was more or less in danger of injuring the integrity of primitive truth (such, I mean, as the Catholic Church held before St. Austin); but, in almost every one of which, a more than human guard seems to have been on her expressions; for instance, in the article of the justification of man, the words are, "We are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our own works or deservings." Now, you will observe, that while every idea of merit is exclusively ascribed to the Redeemer, and while our own works or deservings are expressly shut out from any kind of rivalry with that grand primary consideration, still faith is held, not merely to be the necessary instrument or "hand," as Mr. Cooper describes it, "which receives, applies, and appropriates the gift;" but is stated to come into God's view, as a subordinate consideration, in his accepting of us; for how else could we be accounted righteous before God? By faith, then, as faith is a qualification which God requires and approves, we might be justified in our own consciences,—by mere instrumentality in faith: that is, I mean, such language might be consistently used; and it is such justification that must always be intended by those who limit their view of justifying faith to its mere recipiency. But, when the Church connects our faith with our being accounted righteous before God, it shews that faith is, in the first instance, necessary to God's approving and accepting of us, not less than to our being subsequently satisfied respecting that acceptance. And, when it tells us

in the Article next following, that good works spring out necessarily of a true and lively faith, it shews that what God requires in us, in order to acceptance, is, indeed, the essential spirit of all moral excellence. The inference, on the whole, is, that justification (or acceptance with God) "is," most essentially, connected with moral obedience: "this," being the work of God (that is the highest possible exercise of moral obedience), "that we believe on him whom He hath sent."

But will not this make our acceptance depend on our own works, which is so emphatically and repeatedly denied? Certainly not: I mean in any sense which maintainers of the doctrine of grace are called on to deny. Our own works are what we can perform by our own power; but faith is that action of the mind which we can only be raised to by the almighty power of God: to say, then, that our acceptance depends upon our faith, is only to affirm that God makes us what He would have us to be before he takes any pleasure in us. As in the creation of the world, God first said, "Let there be light," and then, when light had risen at his command, "saw the light that it was good;" so God first brings light out of darkness, and order out of confusion in the human heart, and then blesses his own work, as in creation. The penitent, who has learned the true way of salvation, does not work, as if that were to do him any good; but pray: to ask from God what he feels he cannot himself take one effectual step toward, being all that he conceives in his power. He, in the mean time, faithfully endeavours to work; but, instead of

hoping to make himself better, he can scarcely persuade himself that he does not daily grow worse. Therefore, the effectual grace of God is what he looks for; and every symptom of deepening devotion, of increased strength, of growing love to God and goodness, is wholly ascribed to that great source, and rejoiced in as entirely proceeding "from the mercy-seat above." When consolation thus begins to be felt by him, its ground is in no respect what he has done, it is wholly what God has wrought in him. To God's mercy in Christ, then, and the grace of the Spirit through him, he ascribes all his salvation and all his happiness. Nor is he curious to ask by what terms of art the theory of this mercy and grace may be most exactly stated: the possession of the substance brings to him at once the sure pledge of God's love, and of his own felicity, both here and hereafter. He has no trouble from speculative doubts, and he has no taste for subtleties. He is most grateful for God's inestimable love in the redemption of the world by his Son; but the emphasis of his joy and gratitude is, that instead of merely viewing that transaction as giving him security against God's wrath and a title to heaven, he feels himself, individually, in possession of its substantial results: he who died for him, also lives, in the noblest sense, in him; and the heaven he looks forward to, is already begun in his heart.

There is no need, therefore, in this view, of planting a hedge of metaphysical thorns to shut out the notion of man's merit, for such a thought cannot present itself. Who could connect the idea



of merit with emptiness coming to be filled, misery to be relieved, the dead to be quickened? Nor on this principle can it be, for one moment, necessary to use acute arguments to shew that justification by faith “does not make void the law;” for, however this may seem indispensable (as much as it may to others appear paradoxical), where the moral law is supposed to have as little part as the ceremonial in our justification before God (Chr. Obs. vol. ii. p. 685), it is altogether superseded when justification itself is considered as in its substance nothing else but the Divine goodness graciously recognising, with paternal complacency, that principle of a new nature in the heart of an individual, which the Eternal Word died, as man, to purchase, and lives and reigns as Head of the Church, to communicate, to cherish, and to perfect: for while this view of justification infinitely excludes merit by its dependence on a qualification, which is not our work, but God’s work in us, it no less infinitely secures the integrity of God’s moral law; by that qualification, being the very root and essence of pure immutable morality.

That the view I have just given of justification by faith is that which is maintained throughout the New Testament, would, I conceive, soon appear, if the Holy Scriptures were once read with an unbiassed and a consecutive attention. It would be seen that, wherever faith is spoken of, its moral efficacy is that which is dwelt upon; and its peculiarly moral nature, that which gives it such special ascendancy among the Christian graces. I say its peculiarly moral nature, for what is faith but a

radical rightness of mind and heart toward God, which secures our entire acquiescence in every manifestation of the Divine will; makes God, practically, our chief good, and moral goodness the very element which we breathe; that is, I mean in proportion as it (faith) prevails in us? This is clearly St. Paul's view of Abraham's faith, "as imputed to him for righteousness:" and this is the idea expanded and exemplified in that most noble 11th chap. of Hebrews. And faith in Christ only differs from this as a higher exercise of the same grace differs from a lower; for what is faith in Christ but the radical rightness mentioned above, rising superior to still greater discouragements than even those of Abraham, recognising its glorious object in the form of a servant and a sufferer; and through the Divine perspicacity of its discernment, and the happy soundness of its taste, discovering in the very reproach of Christ — in that which he submitted to, and, consequently, in that which is to be submitted to for him — a glory and a blessedness, in comparison with which earthly honours and acquirements sink into folly and baseness?

Such, clearly, was the faith which our blessed Lord gave such high praise to in the centurion. With what exquisite fitness did our Saviour, on that occasion, declare, that "many should come from the east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," &c., when he saw before him so perfect an exemplification of Abraham's own spirit; the centurion's confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ being exactly of the same generous, powerful, un-

limited kind, with the confidence of Abraham in the Almighty Father. "They," says St. Paul, "which be of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham." Need I ask, whether the epithet of *faithful* here does not describe Abraham's moral character? But if so, the faith which constitutes a likeness to him, and is the ground of being blessed with him, must be a moral quality, and, of course, an exercise of obedience to the moral law.

"How," says our Saviour, "can ye believe, who seek honour one of another, and seek not the honour which cometh from God only?" Than these words, what can be a stronger proof of the believing here spoken of being a moral disposition of the sublimest kind, since our Lord, in these expressions, makes it to imply, essentially, both the most heroic dereliction, and the most spiritual preference, that could be made by man in this world?

When, therefore, our Redeemer used these words, and when he gave that eulogium to the centurion, did he not evidently value faith as a moral quality? and not only as being a moral quality itself, but as supposing or implying the essential principles of all moral excellence, as far as is attainable by man? Is not, then, our Lord's method of estimating, while on earth, our surest standard for his estimating now, in his spiritual kingdom? and, consequently, must we not infer, that the faith which he most highly approved then, is the faith which he will most certainly reckon for righteousness now?—that, as he then valued faith only on moral grounds, nothing can



be more certain than that he so appreciates it still, He being "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

As our Lord has, in the passages referred to, fixed his idea of faith ; so, I conceive, he has no less clearly given us the true sense of justification in the parable of the Pharisee and the publican. He "spake this parable," we are told, "to certain who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others." His object, therefore, evidently was, to shew that God's rule of accounting men righteous, was as different from that of the Pharisees, as one thing could be from another. "The publican," our Saviour says, "went down to his house justified rather than the other ;" that is, evidently, God regarded the publican as a just man, in consequence of that principle of humble, penitent faith, which was formed within his heart, and breathed forth in his prayer ; while the self-satisfied Pharisee, as having but a form of godliness, and being destitute of the power thereof, was no less justly rejected. That this is the purport of the parable, I think can scarcely be disputed ; and, of course, the moral law is so far from being passed over in this case, that it is the spirit of the moral law which is maintained by our Divine Saviour, in contradistinction to its mere outward letter. In fact, this parable is in the most perfect unison with a remark of our Lord's on another occasion : "Wo unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ! for ye pay tithe of mint, and anise, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith."

It might be taken for granted, I conceive, that

St. Paul's view of justification would not be very different from that of our Saviour. But this complete agreement will be strikingly evinced by comparing what St. Paul says in the passage already adduced respecting Abraham's justification, with our Lord's account of the publican in the parable just referred to. It was a right disposition which, according to St. Paul, recommended Abraham to the approbation of the Searcher of hearts. God had said to him, in a remarkable manner, "Seek ye my face:" and his heart no less remarkably replied, "Thy face, Lord, will I seek." Every discouragement lay in his way, but his heart clave steadfastly to God in spite of appearances. Thus was he strong in faith, giving glory to God, and therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness; that is, as I have already observed, because it was the very essence of all genuine righteousness. And do not our Lord's words evidently imply, that the all-seeing eye of God discovered a principle of rectitude, akin to that of the faithful Abraham in the breast of the publican? His words are few, indeed; but his very movement speaks, and satisfies us far more than verbal expression could do; that, whatever he might have done, he now fears God, hates sin, and is, in the highest degree possible, of an humble and contrite spirit. Thus he pleased God; for "he went down to his house justified." (In the common translation, it would seem only comparative; but in the original, it is more absolute.) "But, without faith, it is impossible to please God; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them

that diligently seek him." It follows, therefore, that the publican, participating of Abraham's disposition, found, in his degree, at the hand of God, the same gracious acceptance. And we are authorised to conclude, with no less certainty on the whole, that whenever St. Paul speaks of justification, he must be in unison with his Master and with himself; and, therefore, must continually suppose this blessing to belong to those, and those only, who have such a faith as the above-quoted scriptures describe; that is, such a faith as implies the vital root of all moral rectitude, to God, our neighbour, and ourselves.

How simple and unperplexed is this view, if only we keep in mind that we can obtain from God alone, through the grace of his Eternal Son and Spirit, the qualification here spoken of! And how suitable is it, that God should, indispensably, demand rightness of heart, when He, himself, is ever ready to give that rightness to them that earnestly and perseveringly ask it! There is, really, no more of man's righteousness, in this view of our acceptance with God, than in that of the Calvinists; the only difference is, that God is regarded as actually giving, in the one case, what he is supposed only to impute, in the other. But, when we know that God is all-powerful, as well as all-gracious, is it not more reasonable to think that he should first make us what we ought to be, and then account us what he has made us, than that he should account us to be that which we are not? which last seems to be necessarily implied in the doctrine which I am combating.



You may, perhaps, think that all this is fruitless disputation: I soberly think it is not. It is my persuasion, that the subtle, paradoxical manner in which some of the most serious Christians, both now and heretofore, have been accustomed to speak of justifying righteousness, of faith in Christ, and of acceptance before God, has been, and is, one of the greatest hinderances to the diffusion of true religion in the world, as well as to the growth of it in the individual. Still more, I do think, that to dwell upon these ideas, as if they were prime truths of Christianity, is one of the greatest infatuations which could take possession of good men.

I here speak from feeling. Had my mind continued to be perplexed with the notions of a faith, and a justification, which were to be apprehended distinctly from the quickening and renewing influences of God's Holy Spirit in my heart, I cannot see how ever I should have had quiet of mind, or clearness of understanding. These notions were much pressed upon me, from my very boyhood; and, when I began to think seriously, they cost me many a painful thought. But my own heart told me, that the path of safety was simple and unequivocal; that what God required was that which God alone could work, a new and spiritual nature; that if I had this, I must be safe and happy; that if I wanted it, I must be wretched and miserable. Instead, therefore, of puzzling my mind with subtleties, I endeavoured to pour out my heart in prayer before God. I knew, by deep experience, that sin was misery; and I already felt enough to assure me, that the fear and love of God would be

happiness. I saw, by degrees, that the change of heart I was solicitous for, could not be brought about by any merely moral or philosophical contemplation of God ; but that I must obtain a lively, spiritual apprehension of God manifest in the flesh ; such as would effectually bow my heart to the self-denying yoke of Christ, and make me actually partake of his unworldly, unselfish, divinely pure spirit and temper. For this faith in Christ, this vital principle of the life hid with Christ in God, I more and more sought ; and, when it is sought as the one thing needful, it cannot be sought in vain. From the simplicity of this pursuit, therefore, I have never found any reason to depart : the fulfilment of such desires, in any substantial degree, implies, in the most satisfactory way possible, that God's anger is turned away, and that he comforts us. He evinces, most conclusively, that he is our Father, when he makes us " partakers of the Divine nature."

Now, whatever may be the precise meaning of the scriptural term *justification*, I conceive its substance cannot be missed in such a course as I have ventured to describe. It is allowed to be one of the exclusive privileges of God's children by adoption and grace, and to be inseparable from that high relation ; consequently, he who seeks to be a child of God, seeks, in the surest method, to be justified. But it is by spiritual regeneration we are made children of God. Our Saviour tells us so most distinctly when he says, " That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." It follows, then, that to seek

spiritual regeneration is to pursue, compendiously, and at once, all the privileges and blessings which belong to the adopted sons of God.

But it may be said, that justification is a blessing distinct from regeneration, as the latter means the spiritual change which is wrought in our nature; and the former, the alteration which takes place in our circumstances, when we pass from a state of condemnation into a state of favour. I fully grant that there is this difference of meaning in the terms, as generally used by divines: whether the New Testament supports them throughout, I will not now inquire. But, allowing the difference in the terms, it does not therefore follow that there is any distinctness in the thing signified. "He," says St. Paul, "who is led by the Spirit of God, is the son of God." And, "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you; but if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Here, and in numberless other passages — indeed, throughout the Scripture — the inward influence and inhabitation of the Spirit of God is that which constitutes a child of God; but a child of God is, as such, justified. The one idea is essentially involved in the other; or, rather, justification is contained in sonship, as a lesser blessing is contained in a greater, or a negative one in an opposite positive one. Thus, he who regains perfect health, is thereby necessarily freed from sickness; and he who rises to opulence, is, by inevitable consequence, no longer poor. Precisely, in like manner, he who is regenerated, and made a child



of God by a communication of the Divine nature, is of course, and *a fortiori*, no longer under guilt and condemnation. The simplest statement of the one state is, of itself, sufficient to shut out every idea of the other; and, consequently, to attain regeneration is to possess justification, whether we do or do not advert to this distinction of terms.

But it may be asked, Does not St. Paul dwell upon justification as if the thing itself had a distinctness in it beyond what I am allowing to it? To this I answer, that an unprejudiced attention to St. Paul's views of justification would shew that he considers it exactly as I have just endeavoured to represent it: I mean, as one of the points of view in which the blessedness of a state of grace may be contemplated, or one of the circumstances by which it might be popularly illustrated. Nothing, we know, is more common, in discoursing on any subject, than to use distinctions for the sake of elucidation, where there are no such distinctions in the nature of the thing.

St. Paul, for elucidation's sake, speaks of the change in a true believer's state, as to guilt and condemnation, as if it were a distinct result of the grace of the Gospel. But that he really meant no other distinction than that of language, or of ideal abstraction, and that justification, in his mind, differed not from regeneration, is evident from this simple fact, that he does not, even in language, always adhere to his own distinction. To be justified in St. Paul's sense, is, by most Protestant Divines, supposed equivalent to being liberated,

or absolved; so says Calvin, as quoted by the "Christian Observer," vol. ii. p. 135. Yet St. Paul himself uses this selfsame term, where it must be explained in a quite different manner. For example, in Rom. vi. 6th and 7th verses, "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin: for he that is dead (*i. e.* with Christ) is justified from sin." You will observe our translators render it, "freed from sin." But the original (as the margin of our common English Bibles shews) is as I have rendered it. The inevitable inference from this passage, I conceive, is, that St. Paul did not restrict justification to deliverance from divine condemnation, but included in it, also, deliverance from reigning corruption, inasmuch as he here applies the term, not to the former (except by implication), but to the latter. It must, then, be granted, that St. Paul did not feel the same solicitude that many Protestant divines feel, to maintain a distinction between justification and regeneration. Nor can we easily suppose that he would have sanctioned the assertion of Mr. Cooper, quoted by the "Christian Observer," vol. iii. p. 288, that "justification has respect to the state of the sinner solely as he is guilty;" the text above implying the reverse.

But it is not on the mere application of a term (forcible as this argument really is) that I mean to rely. In that very Epistle which is supposed to teach most clearly the distinctness of justification from every thing moral and inherent (I mean that to the Galatians), St. Paul uses expressions which

I humbly conceive ought for ever to put an end to that theory of which he has been deemed the author. "The law," says the Apostle, "was our schoolmaster, unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But, after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster; for ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ." Now, let the connexion between these verses be attended to; and let it be fairly pronounced, whether, in the Apostle's view, to be justified by faith, in the 24th verse, to be children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, in the 26th, and to put on Christ, in the 27th, can be other than different representations of the self-same thing? In the first of these verses, a certain end is stated, to which a preliminary process, there described, is asserted to have been subservient; in the verse immediately following, that process is declared to have ceased; and, in the next two verses, the reason of its ceasing is assigned, in the end being answered. In such a consecutive representation, then, as this obviously is, can the end, as proposed, be one thing, and the end, as accomplished, be another thing? Does not every rational principle demand, that if a course be pursued in order to an end, the only natural termination of that course must be the attainment of that end? Consequently, when the law was our schoolmaster unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith; and when we are no longer under that schoolmaster, because we are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus; it follows, by every



law of reasoning, that to be justified by faith, and to be the children of God by faith, are merely different modes of designating one and the same attainment.

I honestly acknowledge, that the more I consider the whole scripture, the more satisfied I am, that wherever justification, in the usual sense of Protestant divines, may be supposed spoken of, it is not dwelt upon as the prime and central object of the Gospel, but as a privilege or blessing, which is necessarily involved in that object, in the manner which I have just been endeavouring to explain. What the central object of the Gospel is, St. Paul most plainly tells; as in numberless passages beside, so with peculiar clearness in the last chapter of Galatians. "For in Jesus Christ, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature," or creation. Now, certain it is, that when this leading idea is analysed, absolution, or liberation from guilt, will come out of it, just as any one of the prismatic colours comes out of the dissected ray of light. And, as St. Paul's occasions led him often to treat the Christian doctrines in this analytic way, justification, in the sense we speak of, occurs wherever the nature of the discussion made it expedient. But it is worthy of observation, that, where such expediency did not exist, the terms *justification*, or *justify*, scarcely are used at all. If you examine Cruden's "Concordance," you will observe, and perhaps be surprised in observing, that, out of the fourteen Epistles which bear St. Paul's name, or are ascribed to him (I use the last denomination on account of

the Hebrews, which I once supposed not written by St. Paul, but which more and more appears to me to be his), there are four only in which these words occur; I mean, with reference to man's salvation: for the word justified does occur in 1st Timothy, but not in the sense I refer to. This is, altogether, the more remarkable, as some of the ten Epistles, which omit the terms in question, are most elaborate discourses on Christian doctrine; that to the Ephesians, for example, than which, I presume, no discourse ever was more animated, more methodical, more clear and copious, within the narrowest possible limits; more extended in its view, more perfect in its representation of the whole glorious subject. Without being at all controversial, it is as systematic as the Epistle to the Romans itself; and seems no less intended to exhibit the complete portraiture of Christianity. What I have said of the Epistle to the Ephesians, applies, with even greater force, to the Epistle to the Hebrews, as the subject is so much more enlarged upon, and the particular reference to the priesthood of Christ was likely to lead the Apostle's mind to every point which he deemed essentially connected with that sublime topic.

It is true, "forgiveness of sins" is again and again spoken of, in the Epistles I refer to; and this, it may be said, is only another word for justification. But I humbly conceive that this is not exactly the case. To be justified, is, strictly, to be either made or accounted righteous. I say, either *made* or *accounted*, because I have quoted a passage above (Rom. vi. 7), where it clearly

means the former; while, for the most part, the latter seems to be its prominent, though I by no means think its exclusive sense, in the New Testament. I must observe, however, that when I say justification and forgiveness of sin are not quite the same, I have the usual narrow forensic sense of the former in view. Because, really, they do seem to me to be nearly convertible terms when understood as I conceive the Apostle intended. I have endeavoured to shew, that when St. Paul speaks of justification, he does not mean any distinct blessing, but merely takes a particular view of one great blessing which admits of being contemplated from a variety of points. In like manner, I conceive "forgiveness of sins" to be another word for the whole blessing of the Gospel; for what is forgiveness or remission of sins, but the being freed from those penalties, and that forfeiture or state of attainder, into which sin has brought the human race? And what is the essence of this forfeiture, the chief of those penalties, but spiritual death—the separation of the soul from God? Remission, then, being the removal of the forfeiture, must essentially be the restoration of spiritual life—the re-union of the soul to God. This is the essence of grace here; and the consummation of this will be glory hereafter. I grant that human creatures, occupied by earthly ideas, and limiting their mind's eye to what is done by sovereigns and judges in this lower world, are apt to think and speak as if forgiveness of sins were one thing, and those happy consequences of forgiveness another. But is not this a kind of anthropomorphism? The difference between



pronouncing and executing a sentence amongst men, is an evident result of human weakness. Instruments must be employed ; and, therefore, time must intervene, and the two acts appear to be distinct from each other. But can such a procedure be attributed to Him, who “ speaks, and it is done ?” In Him, whose word is Omnipotence, can we form any other than the most merely figurative distinction between what he says and what he does ? Therefore, what is divine forgiveness, but deliverance from the actual penalty, and reinstatement in the actual blessing ? Initially, I grant ; but, still, really and substantially.

LETTER TO MRS. HANNAH MORE ON THE DESIGN  
OF PROVIDENCE RESPECTING THE CHRISTIAN  
CHURCH.

MY DEAR MADAM,

Bellevue, Dec. 27, 1806.

EVER since I received the letter which Mrs. Martha was so very good as to write to me, I have had a constant wish to say something to you, were it only for the purpose of obtaining information about you. I have heard, however, once or twice, what I was sorry to hear, I mean, that your recovery was so slow as scarcely yet to be entitled to that name. I trust that I may now hear a more comfortable report through the kindness of Mrs. Martha or Mrs. Sarah, either of whom, I persuade myself, will be the more ready to gratify me when they know that Mrs. — joins me earnestly in the request. To be assured that you are growing decidedly better will, indeed, give heartfelt pleasure to us both. I earnestly hope that your business in this lower world is by no means yet completed; and no one unites with me more cordially in this feeling than our excellent friend of this house.

This is the third Christmas I have spent here in succession; and I have the great comfort of thinking that I never had greater satisfaction in visiting this house than at the present time. I

have the special pleasure of finding, in all the sentiments of its inmates, a substantial identity with my own. I must tell you that this is indispensable to perfect complacency: at least to me (who cannot enjoy things by halves) it is so. And may I venture to add, the more so for this reason, because there are few sentiments of which I am tenacious, that have not, as I conceive, some direct concern with the true happiness of human nature. If, therefore, I ever oppose any one's way of thinking, it is not because I think it at war with abstract truth, but because I deem it hostile to their own happiness. For instance, I should think it very needless to reason with a Roman Catholic on the opinion of transubstantiation; but if I found either Roman Catholic or Protestant placing what was outward in the room of what is inward, then, indeed, I should conceive there was a point to be contended for with all the mental strength I should be possessed of. Thus, also, I should feel no great wish to discuss the topic of predestination; for I am persuaded that, too, is almost always a matter of abstract speculation: but where I found any thing whatever substituted in the place of moral righteousness and purity as a ground of confidence, I own all my zeal would be ready to come forward, though I hope still not intemperately.

I beg your pardon for thus slipping from the higher to the lower ground, from my friends to myself; but I honestly own I am not as great an enemy to egotism as the writers of Port Royal were. Excess is, doubtless, to be here especially guarded against; but absolute abstraction is, I



think, a worse excess : I mean the making mere truth talk to us, rather than an embodied spirit like ourselves. I have heard Nicole condemned as dry ; and I own, with all his excellences, I have seemed to myself to feel something like this : I now am ready to think it owing to his so steadily keeping himself out of view. This, however, is not what human nature can like. Our sentimental faculties are far stronger than our cogitative ; and the best impressions on the latter will be but the moonshine of the mind, if they are alone. Feeling will be best excited by sympathy : rather, it cannot be excited in any other way. Heart must act upon heart : and in order to this, the person who addresses you must personify himself in a decent and proper degree to you,—the idea of a living person being essential to all intercourse of hearts. You cannot, by any possibility, cordialise with a mere *ens rationis*. Even “ the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us,” otherwise we could not “ have seen his glory,” much less “ received of his fulness ;” as St. John again seems to imply in the commencement of his 1st Epistle. In all this, however, I am not pleading for any sort of obtrusiveness, but merely against the stated exclusion of both the first and second person in literary intercourse ; for you will observe, that where the first is shut out, the second does not readily come in. Every thing, to be sure, may be carried to an extreme, and perhaps nothing more easily than the use of the monosyllable *I*. There is, however, a degree of dramatic liveliness necessary to the full effect of the plainest prose, if the point in hand has

any concern with our feelings, and such a quality will be scarcely possessed where there is *vox et præterea nihil*. I am not sure that there is much sense in this plea for egotism, but as I have written it I will let it go.

The mention of dramatic liveliness leads me to revert to a subject which Mrs. — and I were lately conversing on. I had been reading to her a passage in one of Madame de Genlis's "Tales of the Castle," where an account is given of a Moravian settlement in Holland, in which the hero of the tale had for some years found an asylum. And we both agreed, that when once the French shall have caught the true spirit of Christianity, they will be the most powerful instruments of diffusing it that the world could furnish. They possess a faculty of description so vivid; so insinuating, so irresistibly penetrative and magnetic, that when they apply themselves to express those feelings which belong to the new nature, and those results which arise from it, as they have expressed those which belong to the old, Christian piety will have a set of advocates till then unequalled.

Mrs. — well observed upon this point, that the many exquisitely pious writers which France had produced, amounted to a sort of pledge of more general excellence and happiness being one day extended through the nation; it being utterly impossible that the good God would not, at one time or other, visit, with more than common favour, a people who, in the midst of general faultiness, had, notwithstanding, furnished such distinguished witnesses to the best of causes.

I conceive, indeed, that we can yet have but very poor ideas of the grandeur of God's designs respecting Christ's kingdom upon earth; and it is remarkable that the most, even of serious Christians, seem to have very slightly adverted to the subject. They have generally confined their view to what is indeed of prime, but not of ultimate importance,—the salvation of individuals; and, consequently, have thought comparatively little of that collective salvation which the prophecies of both Testaments authorise us to anticipate. Hence, every thing in the visible Church has been estimated by such persons in proportion to its present effect on individual minds; and, consequently, those less obvious, because more profound, arrangements for influencing and finally transmuting the mass of society, have been, for the most part, undervalued, and frequently condemned as abuses and incumbrances; for example, national establishments. Perhaps, however, if our views were more extended, we should see that not only these, but even the continuance of the Romish religion itself in a portion of the visible Church, have been, and are, serving the great purposes of Heaven in a way that would put many an honest but rash Protestant to the blush. Is it not, for instance, extraordinary, that the Romish Church of France should have abounded so much in the most spiritual writers, while, probably, you could not, and most surely I cannot, name one thoroughly spiritual writer of the French Protestant Church? There may be such, but if you know them, as I have said, you know more than I do.



The great scheme of divine goodness, doubtless, demands essentially that there should be an adequate provision for advancing things toward their destined perfection; but it is, surely, of no less moment, that there should be sufficient means of preserving what has been already attained: the more so, as there may be some danger that benefits already possessed may be lost sight of, in the eager pursuit of new objects. That Protestantism was called into being for the advancement of the Church to higher excellence, and that it will not finally fail of its purpose, we must gratefully acknowledge. But there was a primitive excellence in the Christian church — a sublimity, as well as simplicity of piety; in which, without any puzzle of the head, there was a seraphic glow of heart, a fire of divine love without the smoke of dark dogmas. This pure essence of religion lives and breathes in the ancient writers; but though there are many happy instances of Protestants participating in this principle, and some instances, especially in our own Church, of a perfect exemplification of it; yet most certainly it is not, as yet, the prevailing spirit even of pious Protestants: it is not the natural Protestant turn. It is blessedly enshrined in our Liturgy, like the pot of manna in the tabernacle. Yet I can find the complete resemblance, as I conceive, but in one writer amongst ourselves, and in one amongst the Lutherans: — Jeremy Taylor the one; John Arndt the other. Leighton, indeed, has the spirit in all its primitive ardency; but we see it through a vehicle which disguises it — the Calvinistic theology, which lessened the

clearness of his understanding, though it could not repress the fire of his heart, nor affect the native sweetness of his soul. Worthington, I think, has the next claim; equal, perhaps, to any one in spirit, with no doctrinal drawback. John Smith stands eminent: but, grand as he is (and my value for him is beyond what words can do justice to), I am jealous lest the philosophical spirit (most excellent when duly subordinate) should have too much carried it above the pure evangelical spirit. In the truly great Cudworth, I find much the same sublimity of principle expressed more argumentatively; but, in that very respect, most usefully. Yet I seem to feel a like—perhaps a more obvious—want of the subduedness of the Gospel, and, of course, of the primitive mortifiedness; which is another term for the same thing. Baxter has a way of his own, tinged with a Calvinistic colouring, and made intricate by the subtilities of the schools; yet he would have been revered in the purest times. And, amongst modern Dissenters, I must name Doddridge, as a most primitive saint.—I ought to have named Bishop Kenn, than whom none approach nearer the primeval warmth of soul. And I must observe, that though I have named Jeremy Taylor as the most complete semblance, I begin to doubt whether I can venture, great as he was, to claim so much for him, comparatively with some others I have named. None had a nobler genius—none read and digested the early Christians more intently—none, occasionally, speaks more like a Macarius or a Chrysostom. But sometimes, even in him,

learning, and philosophy, and mental ardour, run riot; and one fears some deviation, not only from primitive simplicity, but from the strictness of Catholic verity: yet he is a most brilliant luminary. He went too far from Calvinism; and Leighton—the otherwise matchless Leighton—came too near it.

These, I think, are, on the whole, our best Protestant specimens. But, in close resemblance to primitive piety, I doubt whether thoroughly pious Romanists do not bear away the palm from them all. A Kempis, a Bona, a De Sales, a De Renty, a Nicole, and others like them, appear to be cast in the mould of the very holiest of the Fathers. They manifest a spirit of self-denial and self-discipline—of crucifixion to the world and to carnal self; they exemplify an inward walk, as uniform and steady as the path they tread in is narrow; they aspire to a total victory of the spirit over the animal; and, in an eminent degree, comply with the Apostle's exhortation of so leaving the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, as to go on to perfection. In short, they teach lessons and afford patterns in this way, which I do not see equally furnished from any other quarter, and which I cannot but think the Church could have very ill wanted. "Those old Romans," said an ingenious friend of mine, "are very wonderful fellows: it seems as if they had advanced in piety from their not being, like Protestants, engaged in disputes about orthodoxy. Having given up their heads in safe custody to the Church, their hearts were left at full liberty to pursue, undividedly, their



holy and happy instincts of spiritual devotion and love." I cannot give the words, but I am pretty sure I quote the substance. And I do think it is not without foundation. Doubtless, the Romish church is like a garden overrun with weeds, neither pleasant to the eye nor good for food; but then there are in this garden some old fruit-trees, which bear fruit of extraordinary mellowness. For the sake of these, therefore, the garden itself appears to be kept up; not only because the fruit is valuable, but that scions may be had for continued engrafture in that newer garden, which the hand of Providence has been cultivating now for nearly three centuries: not, certainly, without a return of valuable fruit (especially in some more genial spots of it), yet with the greatest room for improvement in the quality of its more general produce. That this improvement will come, may be relied upon; but much providential digging and manuring (together with that engrafting process already alluded to) may be necessary to accomplish it. When the object is attained, that is, when the rational, self-directing activity of Protestantism, is fully imbued with pure, primitive, self-denying, soul-elevating piety, then, I humbly conceive, the old garden will be wholly and happily absorbed in the new.

In the meantime, as I already observed, we, of all Protestants, have in our Liturgy the purest and richest relic of the old state of things; and, consequently, the truest sample and earnest of the new. It combines, in a manner (for which, except in the sacred volume itself, I know no parallel), the sublimity of all St. Chrysostom, with the

solidity of the better parts of St. Augustin. It is like the sacred fire, which the author of the Second Book of Maccabees supposes to have been preserved during the captivity; with this difference between his fable and our reality, that, with us, the primitive flame is not hidden in a pit, but has been kept up, as by the unseen hand of Omnipotence, upon the altar of our national church. May we not expect with design, that, in due time, other national churches may have their altars lighted from ours? This, doubtless, would appear to many a very extravagant fancy; but, I own, I soberly cherish the hope. I conceive extemporaneous worship has hitherto prevailed, because the appetite for devotion has needed the stimulant of human passion and social excitement. When better habits of piety are formed, spiritual food will be estimated by its nutritiousness, not by its poignancy. What Burnet tells us Leighton chiefly aimed at, in his acceptance of a Scotch archbishopric, was “to try how he could raise men to a truer and higher sense of piety, and bring the public worship out of the extempore method into more order; which he thought of more importance than a form of government”—an attempt, doubtless, to which the angelic man was propelled by his own high-raised taste, and in which he failed no less surely, from the want of the same taste in his countrymen. This, I do not fear, will at length be realised as to the substance of the pious wish, with respect to the Church in general. And when that “truer and higher sense of piety” shall require a worship suited to it, what

model will be so naturally looked to as that which, though drawn from the most ancient sources, is as far from being obsolete to-day as it was on the day of its first establishment?—that which presents to view the most exquisite junction of the soberest rationality with the sublimest piety, that has ever been yet exhibited in this lower world?—that, lastly, which has been hitherto unique in this combination of qualities, and which was, most singularly at the first, raised to, and since as singularly maintained in, its unrivalled eminence?

Throughout the natural world we see every thing, however interesting or valuable in itself, serving some further purpose. We are refreshed with the fragrance, and delighted with the beauty, of the vernal bloom; and, most certainly, this was the purpose of the great Benefactor; but evidently not the chief purpose: the bloom disappears, and other objects succeed still more valuable, because more intimately conducive to human comfort. Yet this greater benefit is really conferred but by the way; for, as the blossom contained the embryo of fruit, so the fruit contains the embryos of trees. Can we suppose that this plan of successive advancement does not hold as fully in providence as in nature, or that any event can terminate in itself in the one, any more than in the other? But if there be the same fruitfulness, and the same progression, what a view does it give us of the grandeur of final results, since our own observation tells us that there is no restriction within a narrow circle in providential, as in natural causes and effects. In the latter, the



blossom produces fruit; the fruit, seed; the seed, a tree; and there it begins again: but in providence, every succeeding stage of the progress involves new combinations, and, consequently, teems with new powers; so that, in this great sphere of divine action, there is illimitable improvement to be reckoned on. We ourselves see continually what an amazing chain of events may hang upon one of the slightest occurrences of common life. What a difference, for example, would it have made, if Jacob had not sent Joseph, at that particular time, to see how his brethren fared; yea, perhaps, if they had kept their flocks in Shechem, instead of removing them to Dothan! How often does the apparently accidental meeting of one person with another lay the foundation, or form the first link, of connexions and consequences, to which imagination can place no boundary! If, then, such is the operation of minute contingencies, what may we not look for from such causes as, most evidently, have been prepared and set in action by something like the special exertion of Providence? If in an enclosed tract of land, where every thing bespeaks the care and skill of its proprietor, we see one portion peculiarly distinguished by marks of his attention, we cannot but infer that some extraordinary object is aimed at, which, when accomplished, will compensate for the labour. In this very light I think I see Britain amongst countries, and the Church of England amongst national establishments. In no other nation or church in the Christian world have there been either movements or results, similar or second to what our

nation or church exemplify. And by all the analogies of the world, whether natural or providential, we are warranted humbly to hope that there are ends in view equivalent to the case, and infallible in the final issue—ends that will be far from being limited to the scene where the process has been carried on, but will, on the contrary, be wide as the earth, and long as eternity. If, even in its late decay, the Romish Church has served the purposes I have been speaking of, what may not be expected, at some time or other, from the Anglican Church, which so singularly unites the best of what is ancient with the best of what is modern; being as if the genuine mansion of that opulent householder described by our Saviour, “who brings out of his treasures things new and old?”

As certain places may be thought to shew extraordinary care, so also certain times may appear distinguished by an extraordinary activity of Providence. And to this latter case may be, doubtless, applied the same rules as to the other. As from the special care, so from the special movements of Providence, extraordinary results may fairly be expected; and those results looked forward to as the means of still more important consequences. If this remark be founded, it belongs to the present day with peculiar strictness. England itself is not more distinguished from other countries, than the passing time is from the ten preceding centuries. The counsels of Divine Wisdom have not yet so developed themselves as to authorise us to anticipate events with any distinctness; but that the best of causes will be signally

promoted, and great advancement made toward the happy consummation, we are warranted to assure ourselves. The gloomy aspect of things is no argument against this. One of the most terrific descriptions in Holy Writ is our Saviour's account of the last times, in Luke, xxi. 25, 26; and yet, when He would represent the aspect of these most awful occurrences, as to His Church and people, He makes use of one of the most delightful images in nature, verses 29 and 30.

I have said enough, however, for the present, on these subjects; I will only add what my friend, Dr. Miller, has lately said in a letter to me; I trust, on no fanciful grounds.—You recollect the lecturer on history, to whom you gave a copy of the “Hints.” “I will cheer you,” says he, “by stating a strong analogy, which gives support to my persuasion that these countries shall survive the wreck of the Continent, and preserve to the new order of the world their precious principles of true religion, virtuous morals, and sound politics. I cannot persuade myself that such treasures shall be dissipated by our ruin; and I think I see in history a grand parallelism to the present dissolution of the continental systems, which justifies my reliance on the protection of Divine Providence. The subversion of the Roman empire is, in many respects, analogous to the present disastrous period. In that great crisis of the world, the providence of God did not permit the lights of philosophy and religion to be trampled under the feet of barbarians. The eastern empire was preserved, as the asylum of that knowledge which, at a remote



period, the west might be fitted to receive and improve ; and then, and not sooner, was the triumph of barbarian conquest allowed to extend itself into Greece. It appears to me that these countries stand now in the situation in which the Greek empire was then placed, and I trust that we shall form the connecting link of the past and coming ages."

I talked just now as if I were on the point of concluding my letter ; but this very interesting topic suggests new matter, which, in writing to you, I am unwilling to repress. You recollect the geographic remarks respecting the Greek and Roman empires, and their connexion with the Mediterranean, which, I told you, I had got from Dr. Miller. I am not sure that I then mentioned his idea of the Baltic being situated by a like adjustment of Divine wisdom in the north of Europe, in order to the formation of a distinct imperial system in that region, which might serve as a counterpoise to the revived southern empire, which he anticipated substantially as it is happening. I have been ever since much impressed with his view. I have thought it improbable that so vast an establishment as that of the Russian empire, reaching from the Baltic to the sea of Kamschatska, and in contact with the Euxine and the Caspian, should be so placed and so brought forward (as it was) into the European system, except there were some adequate function to be discharged by it.

Now, do not present events seem to bear an aspect very consonant with these thoughts ? I look for no suddenly great advantages. I con-

ceive the French empire has its revolution to accomplish with most important pregnancy of result; but I imagine its sphere of action will probably be limited to the mystical empire of the ten-horned beast (Rev. xiii. 1, &c.); and that, consequently, its successes in the quarter in which it is now extending itself, will not go beyond the boundary of the *sacrum Romanum imperium*, which has, at least, a measure of identity (in the view of almost all Protestant interpreters) with the predicted dominion of the first Apocalyptic monster.

But it may be said, have not the northern states of Germany ceased to be part of that dominion by becoming Protestant?

I apprehend, not so clearly as the generality of writers on this subject seem to imagine. They err, I think, for the most part, in too strictly referring the prophecies in question to the outward distinctions of the Church. Doubtless, these are in view, and it is certain that the Roman Catholic communion has been the great scene of the beast's mystical empire. But I cannot admit that that communion and this empire are identical, or even strictly coincidental. I fear it may be shewn that the treading down of the holy city (Rev. xi. 2), which is evidently another view of the same mystery of iniquity, has not yet ceased in the Protestant part of the visible Church: a worse thing than even the worship of images, — I mean that "covetousness, which is idolatry," retaining still its tyranny in the Church polity of Protestants little less than in the Romish communion, and, of course, subjecting the one to too much of the same secularisation

that has been the great source of mischief in the other.

I may, perhaps, be able to shew, that the countries just spoken of may be, at this day, within the empire of the beast in a still grosser sense. But I am led to make a few remarks, first, on a more pleasant point: namely, that, as we cannot confine the empire of the beast, or the treading down of the holy city, to the Romish pale; so neither, I conceive, are we to conclude that that communion is unlimitedly under the beast's dominion, or unreservedly trodden down of the Gentiles. It is evidently the chief seat of the tyranny within which it seems peculiarly to be held, as the ancient Jewish Church was held during its captivity within the actual Babylon; and, by the high sufferance of Heaven, as much of the organisation of the visible Church of Rome as could be perverted, has been abused to the purposes of the enemy of God and man. But the Jewish Church was not dissolved by its captivity, neither (analogously) is that portion of Christendom, which is similarly subjugated, unchristianised by its subjugation. The holy city, though trodden down, is the holy city still; nor is it possible that the utmost subtlety of hell should, in any vital respect, injure, or substantially mutilate, even that outward mystical body, which Christ has purchased with his own blood. As the leaven was hid in three measures of meal, so the same three measures of meal must remain in that contact with the leaven in which God has thus placed them until the whole shall be leavened: the work may be



variously obstructed and delayed, but what God has joined together, man cannot put asunder.

I conceive no Protestant could be much less partial to the Romish Church than Mr. Milner ; and yet, in his " Church History," he has acknowledged the continued preservation of a remnant of true worshippers within the pale of that communion, as expressly as he has maintained a succession of aggregated bodies of true Christians without it. " From the year 727," says he, " to about the year 2000, we have the reign of the beasts, and the prophesying of the witnesses in sackcloth, which was to continue 1260 days, or 42 months ; that is, for 1260 years. We must now look for the real Church, either in distinct individual saints, who, in the midst of Popery, were preserved by effectual grace in vital union with the Son of God, or in associations of true Christians formed in different regions, which were in a state of persecution and affliction."

With Mr. M.'s calculations of time I am not concerned ; but I am gratified to observe, in so conscientious an opponent of all doctrinal error, so distinct and digested a testimony to a most consolatory fact. And I wish you particularly to observe, that though Mr. M. does not appear to have adverted to it, the duality of his representation corresponds with curious exactness to two remarkable passages in the Apocalypse, which, I dare say, have been generally supposed to mean pretty nearly the same thing, under different figures, but which, I cannot but think, when viewed in the

light of the obvious distinction stated in the above quotation, demand a strictly congruous difference of interpretation.

The two passages I allude to are, that, in the beginning of the 11th chapter of the Apocalypse, in which St. John is directed to measure the temple of God and the altar, and them that worship therein; while all the rest of the holy city is trodden down for forty and two months: and that, in the 12th chap. ver. 6, where we are told of the woman being nourished in the wilderness in a place prepared for her of God, 1260 days. That both these passages signify to us the gracious determination of Divine wisdom and goodness to preserve an unfailing succession of genuine Christians, cannot be disputed; but, I conceive, they no less plainly intimate, that two distinct methods of accomplishing this object shall be carried on during the self-same period. Forty-two months and twelve hundred and sixty days are self-evidently the same measurement of time; but the temple of God in the midst of the holy city, however that city may be desolated, is as evidently not the wilderness. Different modes of explanations, therefore, are (as I said) demanded; and I can imagine no two facts more fully corresponding to the two prophetic images, than those which Mr. Milner has placed in our view. His expressions could hardly have been more suitable if they had been chosen with a view to this very object. "Individual saints who, in the very midst of Popery, are preserved in vital union with the Son of God." Than this, what can more agree with that prophetic preservation of

a remnant of true worshippers, who still serve God in his temple, though in the centre of the desolated city? And of the woman in the wilderness, no other plausible explanation could be given than that the figure represents those associations of true Christians, which, ever since the eighth century, have been kept up in different regions, but almost universally in a state of persecution and affliction.

This statement (from one who evidently attached no other importance to the facts, than that they implied the preservation of a remnant of true Christians, in all ages and circumstances,) becomes much more interesting, on the supposition which I have been all along making, of a great scheme of progressive and advancing efficiency issuing in the renovation of society. This will shew the two plans to be, not of preservation merely (since this one end could scarcely require two plans), but of energetic influence in two several ways. There may be some coincidence of idea here with what I have already mentioned in this letter; the one plan, I conceive, being intended for preserving the substance of pure, sublime, heavenly religion, so that no vicissitudes might adulterate its primitive, essential excellence; the other, for actively and variously advancing the circumstances of the Church, by methods suited to the different times, and with much accommodation to human weakness, and, perhaps, alliance with human passions, especially the social sentiment. A description (this last, I mean) which belongs to the Protestant system, more or less as it has disregarded or followed ancient Christianity; consequently, it applies most



to self-directing sects, and least to such a Protestant establishment as ours, the character of this and other (if there be exactly any other) similar institutions, retaining more of the temple and less of the wilderness plan, than those Churches which have gone further from the old ritual.

I am digressing so widely, as to be in danger of putting the leading question relative to the Protestant states of Germany out of view; and yet I cannot (having come so far) resist the impulse to go a little further, in order to advert to a matter upon which some of these last remarks may possibly throw light. It has generally been allowed that the witnesses clothed in sackcloth, in the Apocalypse, mean that succession of faithful teachers which should be preserved to the Church; but the puzzle has been, why two witnesses? If, however, there be two objects, viz. preserving the essence, and extending the influence of Christian piety; and if there be two systems, that of the temple, or distinct individual saints, within both the old and new establishments, and that of the wilderness, or associations of Christians, withdrawing for the most part from establishments, it is reasonable that the teachers of religion should bear marks of this very distinction, and should, consequently, appear under a twofold classification. Now, the fact is, that they have signally so appeared, the same persons having very rarely shewn an equal fitness for doing justice to the spirituality and to the grace of the Gospel; to the fulness of Divine influences which Christians are to aspire after, and may arrive at; and to the energy of Divine influence

by which persons are, in the first instance, brought from a state of sin into the state of righteousness. I also conceive that, on inquiry, it will no less clearly appear, that this undeniable distinction corresponds very generally to the other. I mean that, during the period marked in the prophecy, the most powerful and brightest witnesses for sublime Christian holiness have, with few exceptions, belonged to the temple; have been eminent individuals in establishments, and the most zealous and successful maintainers of efficient converting grace; have either directly or derivatively issued from the wilderness; have themselves belonged to, or got their views from, associated, and more or less sectarian bodies.

That these arrangements, so wonderfully (as I conceive) delineated in the hieroglyphic of prophecy, and no less remarkably realised in the almost uniform (need I say *almost* uniform?) course of following ages and vicissitudes of the Church, were adopted in compliance with exigences, deeply rooted, in the individual and social nature of man, as it has hitherto existed, will appear most reasonable. We can hardly wonder, therefore, that, though the full developement of this twofold plan coincided, in point of time, with the deep degeneracy of the visible Church, or the reign of the beast, tendencies towards it should appear from the earliest times. St. Paul planted, Apollos watered: the former, as a wise master builder, laid the foundation, and another builded thereon. St. Paul was, doubtless, fit for every thing, and is a glorious superstructure-man where he applied him-

self to that work ; but, possibly, by something in his nature, and certainly by Divine guidance, he has been led into the function of the great doctor of grace. It was necessary that he should give this portion of his office the lead in the order of teaching ; and, also, that he should so fill his place as to have both materials and precedents for all future doctors of grace until the Church should attain its fulness of stature ; yet, even the great doctor of holiness, St. John, does not appear to rise in that function above St. Paul in his Epistles to the Ephesians and Philippians ; and, above all, in the Hebrews, which last I am ready to deem, in composition, St. Paul's masterpiece ; and, as to its object, the noblest and most consummate discourse on the necessity of Christian progress and advancement, that could be couched in human language. Even here, however, he strikingly, and, I think, curiously intimates, that exigence which, in my mind, has been a reason for the distinction I am speaking of ; I mean the backwardness complained of by him as a sort of epidemic indisposition in those who had really embraced the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, to proceed onward from those principles, and advance to perfection. Though this was the point he aimed at throughout this Epistle, the passage I allude to (v. 12, and vi. 1, 2, 3,) bespeaks something like hopelessness of any general correction. He would, therefore, still "speak wisdom" for the few that would be "perfect," and with an eye to better times, which he saw in the remote distance. But his words here, and elsewhere, (1 Cor. iii. 1, &c.),



imply an apprehension that, till that fulness of time, the invisible Church itself was likelier to be a nursery for babes than a habitation for men ; and, therefore, while he himself has done nobly in providing inexhaustible stores of strong meat for the one class, he has, also, been the great instrument of Divine condescension in opening, as it were, rivers of milk, which flow incessantly for the nourishment of the other.

But the gracious attention of Almighty goodness to the (perhaps inevitable) infancy of the Church, during so many ages, as well as exact care to have means adapted to circumstances, appears, I imagine, even from the first, by evidences far clearer than mere intimations. I cannot but think that the necessity of the distinctions I have been speaking of, was in view in the providential division of the Church into the Greek and the Latin ; nay, was not out of view in the first construction of these two languages. I think the Greek church was, from earliest times, the trustee of the doctrine of holiness ; and that the Latin church, also, from the days of Tertullian (before whom we have no writer), tended as decidedly to be the cultivator of the doctrine of grace ; the dogmatic style (not meaning dogmatic, here, in any bad sense, but using it to express hard precision) appearing curiously in Tertullian — the habits of an African schoolmaster naturally leading to it. Cyprian professes to regard Tertullian as a kind of master, but still more is he than Tertullian, a doctor of grace ; see his account of his own conversion, inserted by Milner in the Church

History. But it seems as if the function of each Church was little more than preparatory to the fulness of effect, which each respectively bodied forth, in the commencement of the fifth century, when, in the person of St. Chrysostom, all the energies of the one department, and, in that of St. Augustin, all the energies of the other department, appear to have been embodied and concentrated: the former, since that time, has been the patriarch of all distinct teachers of holiness; the latter, of all distinct teachers of the doctrine of grace: in like manner, temple worshippers have congenialised most with the one; and sure I am, that wilderness Christians have pretty generally shewn their affinity to the other.

The Greek Church seems pretty nearly to have concluded its work, when it produced St. Chrysostom; its following luminaries being dim in comparison. The Latin Church became, thenceforth, the great scene; and, for some ages, it contained the substance of the two great varieties in itself. St. Augustin had a well-known set of followers, among whom St. Bernard was most eminent. During this period, mystic divinity (borrowed from Greek Divines and Greek Platonists) came into action, and was, at least, the *locum tenens* for the school of St. Chrysostom. I suppose Mr. Milner cannot be far wrong in fixing the epoch of the reign of the Beast; and, of course, if I am right, of the more entire operation of the two-fold system in the eighth century. From that time, sects have never been wanting. And I believe it cannot be doubted, that almost all of them have

shewn more fitness to nurse babes, than to nourish into maturity. In babes they have been prolific; and therefore, perhaps, were represented, as to their common character, by the figure of a woman — a woman, in whom are emblems identifying her, in some sense, with the Apostolic Church;—as I take it for this reason, because every one of these societies, composed of however weak individuals, has, as a body, made the Apostolic Church, at least the idea entertained of it, a common model. The attempt being honest, and according to the order of Heaven, has, perhaps, been never wholly without success. The consequence, on the whole, has been, that while the collective object has thus, variously, and often most materially, been served, numberless real Christians have, at the same time, been formed. If we look for quantity, therefore, we shall find it in the wilderness, which has evidently been hitherto the sphere of the most infectious piety. But if we look for quality rather than quantity, I conceive we must go to the temple worshippers; fewer, doubtless, in number, but furnishing the best exemplifications of what Christianity can achieve. Not satisfied with merely inchoate Christianity, with the being saved from death, spiritual or eternal, they aspire to consummate Christianity, and, in many a blessed instance, have anticipated the life of glory. Hence, fitly, are they represented as temple worshippers, because even now, in a spiritual sense, “they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in his temple.” They form the intermediate links between the spiritual worshippers (the Annas



and the Simeons) of the old temple, and the kings and priests of the heavenly Jerusalem. These last, however, are but collateral remarks; there are other grounds, doubtless, for the figures made use of.

But, before I quit this, I must just point out the care that seems to have been taken in later times to keep up these distinct functions, until improved minds and manners make it practicable and eligible to unite them (a period, I conceive, indicated by the ascension of the two witnesses to heaven in a cloud, Rev. xi. 12; which, as it cannot mean that there shall be witnesses no longer, must, I infer, of course imply merely that they shall appear in that duality no longer). The case, then, I speak of, seems striking in the first formation of the Protestant body, in which the early distinction of two Churches is resumed, the Lutheran answering to the Greek, the Calvinist to the Latin; the first rejecting the dogmas of Augustin, and leaning more to the liberality of Chrysostom; the latter, forming those dogmas into a more compact and systematised form. I do not think either of these establishments is to be confounded with the substance of the systems to which I am respectively referring them, any more than the visible Church is to be confounded with the invisible; but I conceive, that as the visible Church was, probably, divided into two at the first, in order to the future production of the two systems; so I conjecture the reformed visible Church has been analogously divided, in order that the same two systems may be suitably supported, as long as their existence is necessary.

In Britain (wonderful Britain!) the two great members of the Reformation meet; the Calvinist Church being established in the northern division, the Lutheran Church in the southern. In the former, no other organisation presents itself than what might have been looked for on a view of local circumstances. In England, as I have already been endeavouring to shew, all is peculiar. In the Establishment, the theology, common to Luther and Melancthon, was adopted in the Articles; but the unmixed piety of the Primitive Church was retained in the daily Liturgy and occasional Offices. Thus our Church, by a most singular arrangement of Providence, has, as it were, a Catholic soul united to a Lutheran body of best and mildest temperament. I will not repeat what I have said in foregoing pages; and, therefore, shall here observe only, that the animating spirit of our Establishment can alone have been the principle through which so numerous a body of temple worshippers, of the most genuine kind, have been trained within the pale of the English Church.

But it is in England also, that the woman in the wilderness has appeared in her happiest features and most beneficial circumstances. As the Establishment has done much more than any other portion of the reformed body towards preserving primitive piety, so no other sectarian Christians, perhaps, in the world, have caught so much of that piety as the English Nonconformists. The two plans of preservation and increase, and the two classes of teachers (of grace and of holiness), have, by an unexampled adjustment, been brought into

an equally unexampled contact and intercourse with each other; and the effects, even in our limited view, might justify us in saying, "It is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes."

It is astonishing how minuter circumstances have been regulated with a view to this invaluable result. Can we doubt that this state of religious liberty was the great purpose for which civil liberty was, by so continued and complicated a process, elicited and purified? But I wish to keep within the Church itself. May we not, then, discover traces of the all-wise hand, in those principles of liberality which are planted in the very bosom of our Establishment, by the adoption of Articles that are deemed by different men to countenance their several opinions? The Articles themselves, however viewed, were new; and the Liturgy, in every substantial part, and the spirit of the whole, was most ancient; here then, also, the Church exemplified and fostered a safe spirit of latitude. In fact, so undogmatic, so purely devotional and spiritual a system could, in its natural bearing, lead to no other than a candid and generous temper and conduct in its honest members. And, therefore, till the act of toleration passed, the Church was as if without the bracelet of her right arm. The advantages hence derived (not from the thing last mentioned, but from the continued spirit which that act but embodied,) to the British mind and character, you know as well as I.

As something like the two systems was, though not combined, left room for, within the visible pale of the Establishment itself; so, within the circle of



English nonconformity, we see a modification at least, and certainly a very noble one, of the Chrysostomian system (though very different from the Chrysostomian manner) set in operation in the instance of Baxter. The function of this individual was extraordinary, and the importance of what he did, perhaps, beyond our calculation. A noble resuscitation of unmingled Chrysostomian piety (alluded to before) had occurred in the English Episcopal Church, while it was under a temporal cloud, as if specially to counteract the Calvinistic excess of the Dissenters, as well as for more lasting and general good. But, though this sublime philosophic piety might counteract that excess for the time, and feed elevated minds more lastingly, some other corrective, in which their philosophical principles should be allied, by a well-digested combination with strict and certain theological truths, was indispensable to the satisfaction of reasoning, inquisitive, perhaps somewhat prejudiced Christians, such as the generality of the serious British public were sure to be, in the circumstances of that period. Such a corrective, as far, perhaps, as was then possible, Baxter's works afforded. I cannot think there was ever before, since the Apostles, so substantial an anticipation of the future unity of evangelic doctrine. I cannot think he has perfectly accomplished what was clearly his own wish; but, for a first step, it was astonishing, and is invaluable.

Baxter's intended sphere of influence went, doubtless, far beyond his own party; for, strange as it may appear, they suffered more than they

gained by him. Their piety became less ardent with ease of circumstances, and a faculty of reasoning was growing among them. The rationality of Baxter, of course, took more than his piety; and the former, unaccompanied by the latter, became the stock on which Socinians and Arians soon grafted their opinions. A special resort (as it should seem) to the twofold system was, what, to human view, alone prevented a general apostasy of the nonconformists. As Baxter rose like a new Chrysostom, so his contemporary, Owen, arose like a new Augustin; and the rationality of the former was more than met by the improved dogmatism of the latter. Thus, as one class of Dissenters, probably the more numerous — certainly the wealthier and better educated — having diverged a little, wandered onward they knew not whither; another class adopted a far stricter and more extreme modification of the former tenets of their body, prepared by a mind wonderfully fitted for the purpose (Owen being every thing except a true philosopher); and, by means of this new school, Augustinian and Calvinian orthodoxy was kept alive and strong in the whole body of Independents; while, amongst the Presbyterians, it was only retained by a varying number of individuals. It may not unreasonably be supposed, that Providence permitted this very schism (between Independents and Presbyterians) previously to occur, that Owen's influence might have a more certain sphere of action.

In this way, then, was the feeding of the woman in the English wilderness provided for,

during a most dark and dreary period, a period like that before the call of Samuel, in Israel, of which it is said, "The word of the Lord was precious (that is, evidently, scarce) in those days; there was no open vision." It was, to be sure, the period of a Doddridge; but I conceive, his personal piety was far above his ministerial usefulness: the times were against him—he was as a light shining in a dark place—and, perhaps, he not a little mistook his way; for, being zealous for Dissenterism, he, doubtless, thought to serve the Christian cause; but he much more served Arianism, which was far from his heart: the pious spirit of his writings, probably, does much more than his living labours ever could accomplish.

The gloomy period I refer to, was terminated by the rise of Methodism, a movement in the wilderness system as remarkable in its nature and circumstances as, perhaps, any that has occurred since the rise of Christianity. I might here enlarge, but I must not. The first circumstance that strikes one is, that this new movement did not, like almost every similar movement hitherto, appear under one simple form (which, in England, till now had been, if we except the Quakers, uniformly Augustinian), but, on the contrary, exhibited two distinct schemes of theology, strictly corresponding to the twofold distinction which I have been pointing to in so many instances: perhaps I ought not to say strictly corresponding; for, although Mr. Whitfield was exactly Calvinistic, I cannot say Mr. Wesley was as exactly Chrysostomian: he had most certainly every feature of



Chrysostom's system and spirit beyond any other individual, to my judgment, that is within our knowledge. But he had more; he had, also, a more direct apprehension of the converting energy of Divine grace, as taught by Augustin, than seems to me to have been possessed by any of the modern Protestant followers of that Father. With these singular properties, he had his errors and prejudices; exaggerated by his enemies, but too obvious to his most candid friends.

Here, then, I conceive was a wonderful apparatus of Providence for reinvigorating Dissenters, and resuscitating the Establishment; both instruments taken from the Establishment itself: the fixedness in Catholic varieties, necessary for their destination, being (it is likely) only to be found within her primitive pale.

The varieties of their first movements seem to me curiously providential: Whitfield, from the first, was affectionately rather than intellectually pious; he, therefore, of himself, soon became acquainted with those inward exercises of impressions to which he was to raise so many others. His first feelings of experimental religion had no mixture of Calvinism, but they were of a kind to predispose him to adopt it when offered: he accordingly returned from his first voyage to America radically impregnated; without this, he could not have been the Evangelist of nonconformists: how far he has actually been such, you need no information.

John Wesley had, naturally, more acuteness in thought and ardency in action, than warmth of

affection. To the study of all our best authors he had added the severities of an ascetic life, and, had he continued within the shelter of a college, he might have never suspected his want of any Christian feature. He, too, was led to America, and taught, by various keen trials, that there must be something in religion beyond what he was acquainted with. Under this painful sense of spiritual want and weakness, he returned—his heart sought some “counsellor, one of a thousand.” To be advanced from the unregenerate to the regenerate state, was now, though he did not comprehend it, the instinctive desire of his soul. An individual instructor might have been found for him in England, but the risk, in that case, of a Calvinistic infection, would have been extreme; a guide is, therefore, brought from Germany, who, having been trained in the Lutheran school, teaches him the essence of Augustin’s doctrine of grace, without its dogmatic accompaniments. This arrangement, I own, I contemplate with wonder!

I said that Doddridge somewhat mistook his way: I think it possible that John Wesley may have, in some respects, done the same: instead of making it his chief object to diffuse a general spirit, he was solicitous to see specific fruit, and form a people. In some respects, this might be inevitable; yet, I conceive, he might, with advantage to himself and others, have been less engaged in the wilderness system, and more in promoting temple worship; that is, have placed less reliance on the mutual excitement of a religious association, and trusted more to the abstract efficacy of those

high principles of piety which distinguished him from so many both of his predecessors and contemporaries. This, however, is but conjecture.

A weakness, in which pride or party ambition had no part, led him to pursue every appearance of good, at the loss, probably, of some of its substance : as the leader of a set of people, therefore, I conceive he has, like almost all before him, produced a mixed effect ; but, as a witness to evangelic truth, he has accomplished more than will be thought possible by any one who has not examined his multifarious writings, on that plan of extended comparison and analytic discrimination, of which I have in these last pages been led to attempt an outline. As yet, the body of Mr. Wesley's plan (which at the best was unwieldy and plethoric, and is now, I apprehend, sinking more and more into a cadaver) has revolted the philosophic, though serious, observer from any attempt to understand and estimate its soul. But as this lives in a separate state (I mean in his books), where it is beyond casualty, so I doubt not it will yet do signal service, and serve as a guardian angel (if I may thus wire-draw my metaphor) to numbers yet unborn. In plain truth ; after every fair acknowledgment of much rashness, much prejudice, great credulity, and, above all, a value for rapid conversions, from which some degree of enthusiasm was inseparable, there will still remain in John Wesley's writings such elements of evangelic truth and piety, that, if properly culled and collected, separated from all accompanying crudities, and reduced to what would be merely a just and natural arrange-



ment, they would form, I will not say, a perfect scheme of Divinity, but (I do most soberly think) a compendium, the most practical, the most truly philosophical, the most scriptural, and, I must add, the most consonant with our matchless Liturgy, that has ever yet been exhibited. It is, in my judgment, the very spirit of Macarius and Chrysostom, of Smith and Cudworth, of De Sales and Fénelon, simplified, systematised, rationalised, evangelised ! Will not even you, with all your candour, think that I prove myself disqualified to form this estimate by hazarding the assertion ? I must, however, leave my judgment at your mercy, for I can now say nothing by way of evidence, except simply this,—that which I thus commend, I think I am more indebted to than to any other means of information, except the Holy Scripture : indeed, I have already brought these very principles more than once before you, and was gladdened by your strong approval of them. Do you remember how much even good old Dr. Maclaine was pleased with my account of Faith in the little thing against Daubeny ? If I have spoken rationally on the subject, it is to John Wesley, above all other human aids, that I owe it.

Knowledge can be communicated but in two methods,—the dogmatic and the philosophic. In the dogmatic method, propositions are authoritatively pronounced, and implicitly adopted ; in the philosophic, principles are rationally developed, and received on conviction. Our Divine Religion has made use of both methods, but with this material difference, that it has employed the dogmatic

method only where it was indispensable, and the philosophic, on the contrary, wherever it was practicable: thus, the law of Moses was delivered dogmatically, its spirit being that of bondage, and the heir, while a child, differing nothing from a servant. But the Gospel is essentially philosophical, as implying liberty (Gal. v. 1), maturity of understanding (1 Cor. xiv. 20), unreserved communication (St. John xv. 15), and the giving a reason of the hope which is in us (1 St. Peter, iii. 15), which implies that the hope itself has been rationally conceived.

But this is the Gospel in itself, not as it has been embraced as yet by the generality even of its sincerest professors. I have already referred to St. Paul's intimation of the Christians of his day being, for the most part, but babes, and, therefore, needing still the milk of first principles, as being unfit for stronger truths. This, however, equally implied a necessity for using with such subjects the dogmatic, rather than the philosophic method; for if the heir continue a child, that course which belongs to childhood must be continued with him; he must, instead of guiding himself, be under tutors and governors, and remain in bondage, if not to the old elements, to some substitutes for them. That text again presents itself, "We speak wisdom among them that are perfect,"—directly implying, that the philosophic method was unsuitable to the immature.

Now, mark the curious fact: how uniformly the wilderness system and the dogmatic method have gone on together; and observe how Augustin

appears to have been, in some sense, employed by Providence to construct the apparatus necessary for the purpose. Doubtless there were babes before no less than after ; but the persecuted state of the Church implied such checks and restraints upon persons and circumstances, as to call for no systematic coercion on the mind. When the outward bondage had ceased, then, and not before, the intellectual bondage comes into operation ; and from that period to the present we see, in almost every instance, the ungrown children of the woman in the wilderness moving about in go-carts of Augustin's wicker-work.

See here a remarkable analogy between the Jewish and Christian dispensations. While the Patriarchs were wandering without a home, and afterwards, while their posterity were in external bondage, no further yoke is laid upon them : but no sooner do they come out of Egypt, than Moses is raised to place them under a set of new restraints, which were to remain till advancing time and a nobler system should render them unnecessary. What was Augustin, then, but another Moses, who prepared for a new race of children a new set of servile elements, adapted to minds, as the former had been to habits and circumstances ?

There were some, however, even under the Mosaic economy, who rose above the level of their time : “ Il y avoit des Juifs,” says Nicole, “ qui bien que vivant sous l’Ancien Testament, appartenoient néanmoins à la loi nouvelle, et étoient véritablement justes et enfans de Dieu.” These were, as it were, an evangelic kernel, growing more and



more within the husky integument of the law ; and it is evident that the providing apt nourishment for this interior growth was in all succeeding times the great care of Heaven. For this were David and Solomon employed ; and the series of Prophets are evidently engaged in carrying on this most interesting object. By these means the anticipatory light shone more and more unto the perfect day.

To this distinguished class under the law agree, as I conceive, the temple worshippers in Gospel times ; as with these, Christian influences have operated most effectually, so in their character all the appropriate features of Christianity have unfolded themselves most perfectly : amongst the rest, an almost uniform freedom from dogmatic theology, and a free philosophic method of interpreting Christian truth, have eminently distinguished them.

The Greek fathers, in their application of Pagan philosophy to Christian principles, were, possibly, often erroneous in the detail ; but I see not well how men like them could have overlooked the congeniality between the higher views of Plato, and the Christian scheme of morality. I have been even ready to imagine, that this might have been a providential end of the Platonic system ; I mean, that it should serve as a support to Christian holiness until the latter should be able to stand, by its own strength, through the full developement of the true philosophy of the Gospel (a state of things, I trust, approaching, but certainly not yet come). It even strikes me, that Clemens Alexandrinus might probably have been an appointed instrument

for effecting this connexion, for binding, as it were; the tender vine of Christian spirituality to the deeply-rooted elm of Platonism; just as Augustin, at a later period, in weaving the wicker-work already referred to, (which, I must here in justice and candour observe, proved no less a fence to the Christian doctrine of grace, than a support to individual weakness,—just as he, I say,) brought his materials from the logical system of Aristotle. “God is a spirit,” said our divine Saviour; “and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” Here are two requisites; both necessary, but the former of primary, the latter of subordinate importance, truth being in order to love. To these, then, you see, I conjecture, the two philosophies have been made respectively subservient.—The primary object, love, was first taken care of,—the Greek Church, as I said before, being its nursery and first asylum; afterwards, truth is not less effectually provided for, the Latin Church being made its strong fortress, and the sharpest subtleties of human intellect its permanent life guards.

I already quoted a passage, tending to countenance my twofold system (in one view of it), from an author to whom the idea had evidently never occurred. Let me here support the above ideas by the observations of that ingenious Frenchman who has so ably defended the Reformation (Villers). In speaking of the events of the 2d century, in his “Short View of Church History,” he says, “It was more particularly at Alexandria, the chief seat of the new Platonicians, that the religion of Jesus

assumed a form more speculative, or, if you will, more mystical, than it had yet received. To this, Clement, a Grecian philosopher who had become a Christian, more than any one contributed." Again, when he comes to the 5th century, he says, "At this period flourished the celebrated Doctor of Hippo, Augustin, the champion of Catholicism (meaning truths deemed Catholic), and the real inventor of the subtle dialectics of the Theologians." Whether this sharp-sighted writer be infidel or Christian, it is not quite easy to ascertain; but, I conceive, this doubtfulness of character makes such remarks as I have transcribed the more impressive, obvious fact alone being likely to produce them. Of the utility of either system he was unfit to judge.

The fact is, that Clemens taught Christian perfection as zealously as Augustin taught effectual grace. There was, doubtless, crudity in the former as well as in the latter: but may it not have been of inconceivable importance, that the yet uncultured and indiscriminative minds of men should have had thus colossal figures placed before them, of the one great end and the one great means of the evangelic economy? And shall we not admire the mysterious arrangement, by which two of the greatest geniuses of the Heathen world were led so long before to erect the workshops (as well as form the tools and prepare the metals) from which were produced these wonderful expedients of unsearchable wisdom?

I have already observed, that Chrysostom seemed to have completed the function to which



the Greek Church appears appointed; that is (in the light of the last stated facts), he finished what Clement began. It is remarkable, that he who is universally deemed the last of the Latin Fathers—St. Bernard—seems to give very much such a second edition of Augustin's "Doctrine of Grace," as Chrysostom did of Clement's "Doctrine of Holiness." I do not mean to lay much stress on such minute correspondences as this last, but it seems curious enough to deserve being mentioned.

What I wish, however, is to speak of the progress of the higher system: this, I conceive, was provided for so long before the lower system became the object of like care, because, as I already have observed, that as weak Christians were, in the three first centuries, kept steady by the very circumstances of the Church, without the go-cart of a dogmatic theology; so the same circumstances, in a good degree, made the adoption of the Christian profession identical with true conversion, and, therefore, implied a less necessity for its being elaborately dwelt upon. But there was no such security for the going on to perfection: here, therefore, the same attention is exercised early, as was manifested in the other instance afterward, when the Christian Church having become promiscuous, and the Christian profession, for the most part, nominal, true conversion became as comparatively rare, as eminent holiness and virtue had been in the former ages. A wise master-builder is, therefore, once more employed to lay foundations; but the soil of society being at that time but swampy, and he a builder of exquisite

invention, he contrived the plan of building in a strongly compacted caisson, in order that his work might be safe and permanent. I soberly think, that the plan has succeeded to admiration: I think, to use another metaphor, that the citadel of grace raised by St. Paul, has been kept secure and entire by St. Augustin's strong-built out-works; that is, *grace effectual* has been safe from all its enemies, under the shelter of *grace irresistible*. Still, I am no less clear that these expedients are but temporary; I am confident the soil of society will at length so improve, as to supersede all need of the theological caisson; and a time of peace in the Church will also make the outworks superfluous.

I have intimated, several pages back, that the higher system appears to have been kept up in the middle ages, chiefly by means of those called Mystics. The stamina of this system were laid very early; probably through that acquaintance with oriental philosophy, which the refutation of early heretics made necessary for so many Christian writers. Origen may be regarded as the patriarch of mysticism; his disciples, however, soon outwent him. But, though this rise and progress of the system may be strict fact, yet the thing might have existed from a simpler cause. Mysticism and school-divinity, as they meet in point of time, throw light on each other. It was a dark unsettled period, in which every thing grew into wildness: I conceive, therefore, that mysticism is Platonic Christianity, and school-divinity Aristotelian theology, similarly disfigured by the existing habits. That the providential end of the former was answered, is proved

to us by that sublimity of piety which we look for in these writers almost as a thing of course: in fact, I consider mystical piety as that modification of the apocalyptic temple worship, which was best adapted to that midnight period of the Church, and to unmixed popery at whatever period.

I have expressed an opinion, that the division of the reformed body into the Lutheran and Calvinist Churches, was made in subservience to the same great twofold object. Every one knows that the former departed as little from the Romish formularies, and the latter as much, as their common principles (as Protestants and Christians) admitted of. While, therefore, the Calvinist reformation has been giving new energies to the wilderness system, and has furnished a new edition of the dogmatic theology, we see the same mystical piety, which had been pursued by devout Romanists, cultivated with like zeal by the early spiritualists among the Lutherans; and, had those worthy persons continued to pursue piety merely as private individuals, the mystical character would, probably, have undergone little change. Though I have represented the Lutheran Church as a sort of successor to the Greek Church, it is not in a philosophic turn, but merely in an undogmatic disposition, that the resemblance holds; and, therefore, had there been no other than mere temple worshippers in that Church, their number might have been but small, their influence but weak, and the results, as to the general interest, eventually inconsiderable. But Divine Providence has its own uses for all combinations of circumstances: accordingly, a new movement



presents itself, admirably fitted to the scene where it occurs, and evidently pregnant with extended and lasting benefit. To that mystical piety for which, as I have observed, no philosophical corrective was at hand, an extraordinary portion of the social principle attached itself; all at once it became diffusive as to its operation, and almost as soon ceased to be mystical, though without becoming, in any degree, dogmatic. Such was pietism; a new and very wonderful combination of the simplicity and purity of the temple worship, with the social excitement of the wilderness system. That it was a distinguished arrangement of Divine wisdom, is to be inferred from the unexampled miracle of Providence with which it was honoured, in the case of the orphan house at Halle: but its importance is, I think, self-evident; it being, I conceive, the first extended instance of the simple energy of the Gospel, acting with efficiency upon society, without the aid of dogmatic theology. I observed early, that if quantity was to be looked for, it must be sought in the wilderness; intimating that, in the plan of Providence, it seemed necessary that Christianity should be both lowered in its character, and reconnected with extraneous elements, in order to diffusiveness. Is there not, then, the appearance of a material advance toward the fulness of time, when we see this great object (I mean diffusiveness) attained by a part of the apparatus only — the social part, without the dogmatic?

I own that, if even this most interesting revival of something like primitive zeal were estimated in itself, and not as a link in a chain, or a stage in

a great progressive plan, one could hardly feel the same complacency in the review of it : for, though it is wonderfully free from positive faults ; though it has uncommon simplicity and godly sincerity, and shews nothing in the world of that ruggedness and severity which the best dogmatists have seldom been wholly free from,—it wants intellectual tone, and seems to form no alliance, in any instance, with either sublimity or beauty. Their hymns, perhaps, might exhibit them to somewhat more advantage ; but their prose writings (while they do honour to their hearts, and have, in every page of them, an air of pure, evangelic, fervent piety, such as no Augustinian or Calvinist, I suppose, could equal, if he did not wholly rise above his system) do, still, so want mind, are so unphilosophical, so destitute of winged words or thoughts, as to make it be felt that they were not the persons to carry religion far into society. I am ready to think, that much more could not be attained in a plan so dependent as theirs was on joint exercises of piety : this they set out with and adhered to ; and, as this distinguished them from their mystical predecessors, so, I conceive, it implied as much of the wilderness system, as undogmatic men could exemplify. They walk without the fetters of Augustin, but they do not seem to rise on the wing of Chrysostom :\* so excellent,

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\* I think it morally certain, that, wherever an individual of this body became contemplative, and pursued private more than joint piety, he would rise above the defect I speak of, and would be a genuine temple worshipper. Such, I dare say, was the excellent Henry Ludolf, private secretary to Prince George of Denmark ; and, I doubt not, many beside him.

however, were they, that I do not feel perfectly at ease in thus appearing to depreciate them. As a movement in the great system, however, I appreciate them highly; and, I presume, they were all they could be in their circumstances. One very great point gained was, that, though the piety was gregarious (and hence, as I said, most probably, its deficiency in tone and intellectual elevation), still, it was not sectarian, at least in a gross sense. I think, on the whole, the Pietists were very like the best and most pious of the modern *unitas fratrum*.

What those good men wanted, our English Platonists, who rose very nearly about the same time, had. A movement, this, which no country, probably, but England,—no Church but the English Church (and she, perhaps, only in times of outward depression),—could have produced. Here, one would think, the elevation of piety, the keeping up the alliance between Christianity and Philosophy, the resuscitation of the very grandeur of Grecian devotional eloquence,—were the objects directly in the view of over-ruling Providence. How these ends were accomplished, you know: I have alluded to these twice already, and need not repeat what I have said. But I cannot help observing, that, with all my admiration of these great men, they appear to me, just as in the former case, to be far more estimable relatively than absolutely; as a most bright and powerful link in the great chain, rather than as an exemplar of evangelic excellence. In this last-mentioned particular lies their defect: they are not enough evan-



gelical. In fact, they are as opposite to the Pietists, in feature and circumstance, as men of such generic worth could be : that is, they are opposed like two instruments employed in two different ways for the same end, one of which most exactly possesses what the other wants. They are both devoted to piety : it is too much philosophical in the one, and too little so in the other. But, perhaps, from both, compared with each other, we may get a clearer idea of a possible union of excellence, than any view that could have been taken, till then, would have furnished.

In that worthy little company of Cambridge-men, considered apart, the progress which began, as I have supposed above, in the school of Clemens Alexandrinus, was considerably advanced. So sober and congruous an application of the best principles of old philosophy to Christian objects, had not been before exhibited ; but still their attention was not sufficiently directed to the philosophy of the Gospel itself. To discover this, doubtless, required a completely philosophical mind, but no less an evangelically subdued heart ; and, along with both, a firm, self-possessing, independent spirit, tied to no system, yet capable of settling in truth, when clearly manifested. Where has this combination yet fully existed ? When it comes into being, we shall see great things. Yet, what is this else than our Lord's junction of characters, " Be ye therefore wise," &c. &c., adjusted to contemplative, instead of active life — which latter he had directly in view ? The comfort, however, is, that Omnipotence can teach the thoroughly willing heart that wisdom

which it could never have discovered for itself: therefore, be our previous qualifications what they may, we may rest on that immutable word, "Ask, and ye shall receive."

I found it necessary to quit my old friend John Wesley for a time, in order that, after making a few remarks on preceding events, I might come back to him, with better means of doing him full justice. Let me, then, point your attention, in the first instance, to this very obvious fact, that John Wesley's Methodism is the most identical re-publication of Lutheran Pietism that the difference of time and circumstances admitted of. It became, at once, intensely social; and therefore, like Pietism, had the same external apparatus with the various preceding associations of the wilderness class; like Pietism, it was a society, not a sect. It was, also, strictly undogmatic; yea, more so than Pietism itself. But, I conceive, it was much less select; and, therefore, if estimated as a religious fraternity, would, I suppose, appear less entitled to commendation. But, it is fair to remember, that no movement of the kind had been ever before so free from restraint, and therefore none other so liable to be promiscuous.

I by no means, however, plead for Methodism in the gross. I view it as a Christian philosopher; and not merely as in itself, but as one of the means of overruling Providence for advancing the great scheme of human happiness. In thus regarding it, I perceive much to gratify the thinking mind. I see a great deal of those enthusiastic tendencies which, I suppose, have always, more or less, existed

in plans of social excitement. But I discover also, in the interior of the system, a stronger and purer principle of Christian piety to be in operation, than, I conceive, ever appeared before in like circumstances. I observe a view of Christianity far more elevated and enlarged than even the worthy Pietists appear to have had. I see the necessity of converting grace insisted on with as much zeal as ever was shewn by St. Augustin himself; and, in addition to this, a subsequent progress and perfection of holiness, maintained and urged in the very spirit of St. Chrysostom. What is more gratifying, I find this (I should almost think) unprecedented union of the doctrines of grace and holiness, manifesting its efficacy in a way equally unexampled: I find it producing, amongst the low and the illiterate, a number (beyond calculation) of pious individuals, who, amid external habits which seem to belong to the wilderness, singularly attain to the internal spirit of the temple. I am fully aware that, with some well-meaning persons of another way of thinking, Mr. Wesley's perfect Christians have been a sort of standing jest: and he, himself, contributed not a little to this by the manner in which he too often spoke, both of the doctrine itself and the supposed living exemplifications of it; in fixing upon which last he used to evince his own fallibility as much, I suppose, as any man, not out of his senses, could do. Still, however, to me, who have read the various records of Methodism with a mind, as I take it, unbiassed one way or other, numberless instances do present themselves of true Christianity, at once in its depths and in its



heights;—of radical conversions, in which all the great truths of St. Augustin, respecting human depravity and efficient grace, are experimentally recognised, followed by a progress, in which the sublime views of St. Chrysostom appear more substantially realised than, I am apt to think, they ever were before, in a number together, or in that class of society—the untaught and the laborious.

I am aware of the many opposite statements with which these remarks of mine might be assailed. But, in spite of all real drawbacks, as well as exaggerated allegations, I must, as a fair inquirer during many years, adhere to what I have said; and, estimating Wesleyan Methodism, not as a field of wheat, whose value depends upon its present produce, but (to recur to a former illustration) as a nursery of stocks in which a new and important kind of engrafture has been, probably, for the first time, experimented,—I must, notwithstanding countless revolting circumstances, acknowledge the special hand of Providence in the movement, and feel cordial satisfaction that the result has been so far favourable. I rejoice in it, as implying the greatest advance yet made toward that union of truths which, though exquisitely existing in the New Testament, is to this hour a desideratum in the Christian Church.

I said something of John Wesley having, in my mind, singularly hit upon the true philosophy of the Gospel; and I intimated that this excellence of his lay in his manner of speaking respecting faith. I do not mean to assert, that on this subject my old friend spoke always clearly or methodically.

He had learned from his Lutheran or Moravian instructor a notion of Christian faith, as containing in its very essence a luminous sense or perception of the Divine forgiveness. This idea mingled itself, every now and then, with his own more digested views, and has produced much confusion, and a very general air of enthusiasm. But, to a reader who takes the pains to distinguish between what is native and essential in John Wesley's theology, and what is adventitious or arbitrary, it will appear, that, though he pays a due regard to the evangelic declaration of God's being reconciled to us, he considers it, not as an independent source of comfort, but as a general benefit, to be made ours, individually, only by our reconciliation to God: he considers Christ as having purchased an amnesty for us by his obedience unto death, and as being ready to bestow grace upon us by the influence of his Divine Spirit, in order to our availing ourselves of that amnesty; that is, in order to our being rescued from the dominion of sin, the world, and the devil, and brought into the spiritual liberty of the children of God. To this latter object, therefore, as the end of all our Saviour did and suffered, he directed all his urgency: inward religion, the being born again of the Spirit, the mind that was in Christ, the life hid with Christ in God, the conversation in heaven;—these, and such like, were, with him, the life and soul of Christian theology; and, from the beginning to the end of his career, he only varied with respect to these points by becoming more and more indifferent to all other (more theoretic) matters. Here, therefore, throughout his whole

course, he breathes the identical spirit of the most genuine temple worshippers ; and he does so consciously and of set purpose, their writings continuing ever to be, as they had been at the first, his favourite studies. He talks often and earnestly, to be sure, of justification as well as of sanctification or of regeneration : but his justification, though he did not clearly see it to be so, was a very different thing from the justification spoken of by Calvinists : theirs is a transaction done in heaven, from which the soul derives consolation by a kind of strong affiance or confidence ; his justification, whether rightly or erroneously conceived by him, is much rather a transaction which takes place in the soul itself—a matter not of affiance but experience—identical with the first consciousness of that peace which passes all understanding. His view of this point, therefore, might lead him into enthusiasm, but it could not lead him from inward religion, his justification being nothing else than initiation into the inward mystery of godliness. He was even jealous of giving to the idea of justification more weight than belonged to it ; and was anxious to rescue certain texts which had been supposed to apply to this, but, as he believed, without warrant. Thus, in his explanatory note on Philip. iii. 8, 9, where St. Paul declares his contempt of every thing in comparison with the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord, Mr. Wesley's words are, "The inward experimental knowledge of Christ, as my Prophet, Priest, and King, teaching me wisdom, atoning for my sins, and reigning in my heart." To refer this to justification only, is miserably to



pervert the whole scope of the words ; they manifestly refer to sanctification also,—yea, to that chiefly : and be found by God, engrafted in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, that merely outward righteousness prescribed by the law, and performed by my own strength, but that inward righteousness, which is through faith, which can flow from no other fountain ; the righteousness which is from God, from his Almighty Spirit, not by my own strength, but by faith alone. Here, also, the Apostle is far from speaking of justification only.” I give you this passage at large, because I conceive it draws the clearest possible line of distinction between John Wesley and the whole class of Protestant Dogmatists : I value it, also, as an excellent specimen of the true method of explaining those numerous passages of Scripture which have been thought by so many to maintain an imputed righteousness ; an idea which has, of course, become a kind of key-stone in the arch of modern theology ; but which, I dare to say, must be taken out, and a solidier substance put in, before the structure will fully bear the weight of man’s spiritual and eternal interests. I think my old friend makes no bad beginning here, toward replacing the word with stone from that Rock which our Saviour has described in the conclusion of his Divine discourse as alone to be rested on.

In consequence of these views, Mr. Wesley, though he often speaks of justification, does not greatly dwell on it : whether he adverted to the fact or not, he seems, in some manner, to have felt, that this particular idea has not the same preference

given to it in Scripture as in the schemes of some modern divines,—justification, or the being justified, being mentioned only in four out of fourteen of St. Paul's Epistles, and in two of the four only passingly. Mr. Wesley, as if aware of this, has used a language somewhat different from that of most of his pious contemporaries. Like them he preached faith continually. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ" is his never-failing exhortation; but, then, the blessing to be thus obtained is not (except subordinately), with him, justification, but salvation: the former he adverts to occasionally, as a member of the evangelic scheme of mercy; the latter he dwells upon incessantly, as the central idea, including all that is solid, and excluding all that is fallacious. His grand doctrine, therefore, is not, as I have said, justification by faith, but salvation by faith;—that is, not the believing in Christ so as to get ease of conscience through the persuasion that we are accepted in Him independently of what we are in ourselves, but the so believing in Him as to have our hearts quickened and purified by his Holy Spirit, and freed from the guilt of sin by being divinely delivered from its power; a view, I conceive, remarkably agreeing with the prayer in the baptismal service, that the child may receive remission of sins by spiritual regeneration.

It strikes me that, as in other matters generally, so, also, in the propounding of first principles (as St. Paul calls them, Heb. vi. 1, 2); or, in other words, in preaching converting grace, there has been a remarkable advance. The earliest writers of the Church somewhat entangled themselves on

this point by their notion of regeneration being inseparable from baptism. They so explained their view of the subject as to cause no dangerous error; nor have they given the slightest countenance to Dr. Waterland and his followers, who use a similar language with a far less innocent meaning; yet they, no doubt, blunted their own spiritual weapons by their inaccuracy; our Saviour's grand position, "Except a man be born again," &c., being, I conceive, the very sharpest edge—the point, as it were—of the sword of the Spirit. The Mystics, who had less respect for outward observances, and more exclusively applied themselves to the interior, though they might not venture to alter the accustomed language, yet, in the midst of their general cloudiness, seem in this instance to have done good service. St. Austin had spoken excellently on the nature of conversion, and so did his follower, St. Bernard, as well as others of the middle age. The Mystics, however, dwelt on the inward work as their great object; and, with less distinctness than those I have just named, were more sublime in their ideas of the spiritual life. But there was, I imagine, this drawback, in some degree, in all the classes I have mentioned, and certainly not least in the Mystics,—that they deemed a state of peace to be attainable only through a long and difficult path, a course of prayer, mortification, and self-denial; to which process the Mystics appear to have ascribed a sort of physical efficacy. The supporters of irresistible grace, of course, said nothing like this; and, indeed, sometimes they speak excellently on the change which those who seek



God a right feel as the result of Divine grace (a heavenly energy distinct from all self-exertion or mechanical aid) working in them; but they speak thus only occasionally — it is not dwelt upon as it deserves to be.

Pious Augustinians of the modern class have pointed out a more direct path to peace of mind than any that went before them. They have protested against all mechanical means of obtaining peace, and resolved the entire business into a spiritual faculty, wrought in the mind by the grace of Christ, which dispels doubt, inspires confidence, discloses the surest grounds of hope; and, in proportion as it exists, and is exercised, implies tranquillity, strength, and consolation. Luther maintained this doctrine as his leading point — so did Melancthon; and, whatever difference was between these great men and Calvin in asserting the importance and efficacy of faith, their language was very much the same. They, also, all agreed that, in the attaining of this faith, God's almighty power was alone to be had in view: consequently, it was to be looked for as that which might spring up in the mind within the shortest time. It was ever to be hoped for, yet always patiently waited for.

In most of these good men, however, the idea of the object to be pursued was less accurate than their view of the method of pursuit. Peace with God was what they aimed at; but the chief obstacle to this peace, in their view, lay rather in the demerit of sin, subjecting them to a judicial penalty, than in the moral pollution of sin, incapacitating them for the love and fruition of God. They,

doubtless, did not grossly overlook the latter ; but, in general, the former point has occupied their principal concern. I am aware that there have been noble exceptions, in whom deep, experimental piety rose, occasionally, above theory ; still, except in the instance of Baxter, the imputation of our Saviour's righteousness was held to be the only sure ground of inward peace, as being that alone which could obtain the Divine favour ; and, consequently, faith was represented as efficient, in this great business, solely in the way of an instrumental medium, it being a faculty divinely wrought in the mind, by which Christ's righteousness was so apprehended and relied upon as to set the conscience at ease respecting its state towards God. In proportion as the moral taste of individuals was more or less vivid, this view was more or less guarded against licentious inferences. But, in consequence of its general prevalence, the doctrine of grace was much more dwelt upon as the relief from guilt than as the remedy for corruption. The first was to be sought primarily, and possessed fully : the latter was to be obtained consequentially, and enjoyed imperfectly. The present blessing, therefore, was much more a change of circumstances than of nature ; and, consequently, faith was to be rather, on the whole, a support against wrong feelings than a source of right ones.

Still, this mode of instruction, however deficient in its theory, was not without its effect in practice. They who spoke thus had frequently better hearts than heads, and a vitalised warmth was transfused through a misty atmosphere. What was experi-

mental had a happy contagion in it, which caught the heart, in spite of the confusion which their theory produced in the understanding. Besides, the stress they laid on faith, and their uniform representation of it as a gift from God, a work of the Divine Spirit in the heart, simplified to their hearers the work of conversion. The result was, that, whenever a real spiritual concern was excited, whatever was the prevalent idea in the understanding, the chief means resorted to was prayer, in which God was looked up to as the sole Efficient; and his influences, illuminative and consolatory, and in some real degree transformative, continually solicited and expected. In this way have taken place such numerous conversions as, I am ready to think, never could have been effected by the soundest and sublimest exhibition of the object to be aimed at, unaccompanied by the same simple and direct method of attainment. The loss, however, has been, that, though the faultiness of this theory has been but a small obstruction to the sincere, in the first stage of their course, it has, too generally, impeded their progress afterward. The motive with this whole class of converts has been desire of safety, rather than of moral excellence; to escape a dreaded evil, more than to attain a positive good. So far, therefore, as they have been impelled by the former, they have gone on, effectually, but in that continued advance which depended on the attractions of the latter, they have, for the most part, been deficient. "I do hope," said good Mr. — to me, "that we have been the means of bringing many, in a substantial



measure, from darkness to light; but, I must acknowledge, we have not found the way of leading them onward." The truth, I take to be, that Mr. — and his brethren are teachers on the wilderness plan, though outwardly, and in their honest intention, adhering to an establishment. I need not observe, here, that all my former remarks about the wilderness system, and the dogmatic mode of teaching, apply strictly to what I have been last describing.

But, what has John Wesley done? In my mind, in a manner unprecedented, he has applied exactly the same simplicity and directness of method to that far more elevated object which I have already stated as principally in his view. As I said already, he has not overlooked the forgiveness of sins, but he has, indeed, looked much above it, and beyond it. No Platonic, or mystic Christian, ever inculcated a more inward and spiritual salvation; and, all he says of the operation of Divine grace on the heart, from first to last, is but an expansion of that single position of St. Peter, "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by them we might become partakers of the Divine nature." With exactly, then, the same ardour as the Puritan, has he dwelt on the efficacy of faith: on this single point he, too, has rested every thing; and, just as earnestly, has he pointed to heaven, as the sole quarter from whence this blessing must be derived. His teaching, therefore, has, at least, equally excited a spirit of prayer, and a resort to God, through the Mediator; and, most certain it is, that this course never was more suc-

cessfully urged by Calvinist preachers as to sensible effects, than it has been by him. Peace with God, if thus found amongst the Calvinists, has been equally found amongst the followers of John Wesley; with the material difference already stated, that the peace aimed at, and, I must soberly think, in countless instances, attained by the latter, has rested, not on affiance merely, or chiefly, but on experience,—a moral and spiritual peace of conscience, arising from habitual victory over sin, and the felt possession of a new nature.

The faith, therefore, which my friend urged his hearers to implore from God, had not one great fact only for its object. It did not merely relate to the propitiation for our sins, but it was an influential, vital apprehension of all the Divine facts which are placed before us in the Gospel. An apprehension so strong as to bring us within the predominant attraction of the objects apprehended, and, consequently, making them excite in us, according to their respective natures, a fear and a love, rising above all other fears and all other loves, and thus producing a reigning spirituality of mind and heart. God, in John Wesley's Christian philosophy, is all in all; Christ is Emmanuel—God with us; God united to our nature, that in that nature, and by means of the most impressive and most penetrating of its possible features, He might make every fair and rational principle of the mind—every susceptibility of the imagination, and every tender fibre of the heart, his apt and able auxiliary in the infinitely gracious plan of “redeeming us from all iniquity, and purifying unto himself a peculiar

people, zealous of good works." Faith, therefore, in John Wesley's view, is the spiritual sense, the divinely produced organ of the inner man, which holds commerce with those glorious objects, and transmits the impression to the imagination, the affections, and the judgment, as the eye transmits the image formed on its retina to the sentient principle. It is a poor resemblance, but what sensible image can do justice to the highest work of God in our higher nature? Such, however, in substance, is John Wesley's leading principle; and, I humbly think it is, identically, the idea of St. Paul,—“We all, with open face, beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord; for God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ,” 2 Cor. iii. 18; iv. 6. May I not add, that it is, also, the most accurate expansion of that compendious, but most sublime, account of true religion,—“This is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent?”

Here, then, I conceive, on the whole, is genuine, evangelical, and yet philosophical religion. It is genuine, because it leaves out no ultimate object; it aims at the very highest ends; it is not satisfied with a sincere effort, a continued struggle, a few occasional advantages, and a tremulous quiet; it looks for such a victory as will bring settled peace—a peace, never releasing from vigilance, but ever crowning that vigilance with the



security which it seeks to preserve. "He keepeth himself so that the wicked one toucheth him not."—"Thou shalt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is staid on thee, because he trusteth in thee." It is genuine, too, because its essence is, the re-union of the soul to God—to him from whom our spirit originated, for whom it was formed, and in whom, alone, it can rest. It is the re-tuning of our discordant mind, the re-adjusting it to the great harmonic system of the intelligent creation, and the restoring it to its place in the universal, never-ending concert.

It is evangelical, because it effects every thing through faith in the Divine Mediator. It regards Jesus Christ as the immediate source of all light, all rectitude, all strength; it considers him as he is, the Eternal God, becoming our refuge, and placing beneath us the everlasting arms; familiarising himself with us, becoming our friend and our brother; but, above all, quickening our dead souls with his own spirit, changing our minds and hearts into his own blessed likeness, and accomplishing this in the easiest and least complicated way—a way, glorious to the highest, yet attainable by the plainest understanding; that is, by making our hearts more and more acquainted with himself. To grow in this spiritual knowledge, is, infallibly, to grow in grace; for, rightly to know our Saviour, is to love him: I mean, the one is the infinitely certain result of the other; and, to love him, is to love every thing that can melt and purify, enrich and elevate, our rational nature. Every thing, therefore, that our wants require, or

our capabilities admit of, is contained in that brief idea—faith, which worketh by love.

I need not tell you that this is philosophical: you will know that the essence of philosophy consists in discerning, comprehensively and accurately, the nature and relation of ends and means, of effects and causes, in discovering fitnesses, and discriminating between what is substantial and what accidental. And you are well aware, that the higher philosophy rises, the more clearly does it perceive the simplicity of nature, and the more exactly do all its theories conform themselves to that simplicity. Do not, then, all these philosophical characters meet exquisitely in what I have been endeavouring to describe? that is, do they not all self-evidently meet in the blessed Gospel, when the Gospel is contemplated in itself, independently of dogmatic accompaniments? On this, however, I need not enlarge. What I wish to observe is, that, in my mind, this very conformity to true philosophy was the immediate cause of all John Wesley's success. Philosophy only developes principles which reside already in the human mind, just as all the principles in Aristotle's poetics existed already in Homer's verses. In proportion, therefore, as rational beings are addressed philosophically (in which idea I essentially include simplicity and plainness), in the same proportion will fair and upright minds receive satisfaction from what is said to them, inasmuch as they feel in it a congruity with their own most settled preconceptions. I doubt whether, since the apostolic times, John Wesley was ever excelled in the faculty of popular

philosophising. This method of instruction, however, might not have always, or every where, been suitable. It was, probably, adjusted to the eighteenth century and the British public.

But, if there was any peculiar excellence in the manner, I conceive there was still more in the matter. This was felt to be strictly philosophical, even by those who could assign no reason for their impression; no force needed to be put upon any understanding, in order to the admission, that “without holiness no man can see the Lord;” or, that “God, being a spirit, they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth;” or, that “the wicked is like the troubled sea, which cannot rest;” or, even that “to be spiritually minded is life and peace.” These, and such propositions, were capable of being explained, and even demonstrated. Let only the attention be once fixed on them, and common sense sided with them immediately. These, however, were John Wesley’s ultimate truths, which he, uniformly, so dwelt upon, as to prove the necessity, the efficacy, the infinite rationality and happiness of one ruling temper, the loving God with all our heart. And this affection he shewed to be producible in one way only, that is, by God’s working in us an energetic impression of things spiritual and divine; which, as I already said, he taught his hearers to seek, not only by using every degree of grace that God had already given them, but also by continual, earnest prayer, on St. James’s principle,—“If any man lack wisdom, let him ask it of God,” &c. Thus, while he took care for the whole circumference of religion,



(no duty, inward or outward, being overlooked by him), he wrought ever at the centre : he shewed his hearers what they ought to be, in every thought, and word, and work, toward God, their neighbour, and themselves ; but he shewed them, as clearly, that the source of these results was as simple as the results themselves were multifarious ; not one of which, he insisted, would fail to follow, if the impression of Divine things — above all, of Jesus Christ, and him crucified,—were made and kept the master-feeling of the mind and heart : that, therefore, there was no necessity, in the nature of things, why any man should continue the captive of one single bad habit, the victim of one distressing sensation of mind ; since God was ever ready, for the sake of his Son, to infuse a principle that would infallibly turn the scale of the soul, make things invisible effectually preponderate, fix the affections supremely on God, and on Him whom he hath sent ; and, consequently, establish purity, and peace, and certain strength, and unfailing consolation, in those depths of the heart from whence are all the issues of life. “ He that drinketh of this water,” said our blessed Saviour, “ shall never thirst,” &c.

There was a property of this mode of teaching which, I think, I have not expressly mentioned, and which yet was invaluable ; and that was, its cheerfulness. A low view of religion cannot be cheerful, nor is such a feeling natural to the dogmatic system : he who conceives that he is in the midst of a reprobated world cannot but be sad, if he has any humanity, let his own personal escape be ever so certain : but when he considers, also,

that he himself, while here, has nothing to hope for but the being supported under a painful, and often—nay, in some degree, always—unsuccessful struggle with his own evil nature, must he not have an irresistible tendency to depression and gloominess? I believe the case has been actually such. The whole wilderness class, I imagine, except where constitution prevailed in individuals, have been distinguished by a solemnity not unlike sadness. Even when they may have appeared cheerful, it has been rather a common sort of cheerfulness, not prevented by their religion (as being, no doubt, innocent in itself, when carried to no excess), than a clearly pious cheerfulness, flowing from their religion, and, therefore, naturally and unaffectedly blending with it. John Wesley's view led directly to this latter effect; convinced in his own heart that God is love, regarding obstinate presumptuous sin as the only object of his full displeasure, his mind dwelt much more on those marks of gracious mercy which this earth manifests, than on the indications of wrath. He did not despise the chastening of the Lord, however or on whomsoever exercised; but that which God delights most to do, John Wesley delighted most to think and speak of:

“ He preach'd the joys of heaven and pains of hell,  
And warn'd the sinner with becoming zeal,  
But on eternal mercy lov'd to dwell.”

Besides, considering Christianity as so glorious and happy a thing, as a blessing not more efficient in healing all the diseases than in engaging and

exalting all the capabilities of our nature, he could neither think nor speak of it but in the spirit of gratulation and triumph. No man ever gave deeper shaded pictures of human misery; but his dark colourings were not theological, but experimental; he described merely what every uninfatuated bosom bore witness to, the actually begun hell of every heart which is at enmity with God; and the use he made of this was uniformly to heighten that *purpureum lumen* of happiness to which he instinctively hastened back, and into which it was his one object to bring, if it were possible, all that heard him. “*Happy*,” said our Divine Saviour, “are the poor in spirit,” *happy* are the meek, *happy* are the pure in heart: never, surely, was this lovely method more cordially followed than by John Wesley; and in no merely human instance was its efficacy more convincingly demonstrated: no wonder;—his very look gave testimony to the truth of his doctrine.

I must point out one more result of John Wesley’s union of Chrysostom with Augustin—too closely connected with the last mentioned not to occur—I mean, that easy, pleasant, I may almost say, gay manner in which he spoke and wrote on religion. I will acknowledge that nothing but the clearest and most obvious evidence of deep piety could have made this suitable; but I must also think, that, as it was in him, nothing but such piety as his own—that rational, undogmatic, effectual piety which he pursued and taught—could have produced it: it was, what could be enjoyed only by one who felt his religion to rest upon the whole nature and fitness of things, and felt himself at rest



in his religion. I should be very far from wishing my old friend to be taken as a complete model for public address. He was, doubtless, often too familiar, and, perhaps, sometimes even too playful (if I may use such a term); yet in the substance of his manner, and in the plan which he meant to follow, I am ready to think he came nearer your own most excellent idea than any other person whose writings I have seen; when you advise instructions to be communicated "in a way that shall interest the feelings by lively images;" and when you observe that there seems to be no good reason why religion alone must be dry and uninteresting, while every other thing is to be made amusing—and ask, "Why should not the most entertaining powers of the human mind be supremely consecrated to that subject which is most worthy of their full exercise," I read that, of which I must say, John Wesley gives me the most entire exemplification I have ever met with, except in the Bible. By the way, if there is any one at this day that has taken steps toward uniting the excellencies of the two systems as well as John Wesley, and without catching the idea from him, that person is yourself. I doubt not you have a place in the scheme correspondent to the peculiarity of your mode of writing; for, while there is a material difference between the detail of John Wesley's views and yours, there is also a remarkable agreement at the centre. But I must not annoy you by enlarging on a subject which you have always shrunk from. You will probably not understand your own destiny fully, till you can look back upon it from a better world.

It is, I humbly conceive, a great matter of thankfulness to be "slave to no sect," that is, to be a Catholic Christian, such as Hale and Boyle were in their day. From my heart, I congratulate you on being one of this hitherto very small, but, I must think, distinguished class. As to your being a philosophical Christian, in the sense in which I called John Wesley such, I shall only desire you to compare the 7th paragraph of the chapter in the strictures on public amusements with the substance of my remarks in the sheet just preceding this one.

I spoke just now of John Wesley being often too familiar; I believe I should rather say, that he often both spoke and wrote with insufficient preparation, and, by that means, fell into tenuity of thought: but it is very remarkable, that, though he talked so with low people, and had always from that class the great majority of his hearers, he never sank into vulgarity, never deviated from the style of a classical scholar and a perfect gentleman. In this respect, that is, in being familiar, yet not vulgar, I consider my old friend as really one of the very first models in the world. Had he possessed a more self-directing mind and a sounder judgment, he would have been a paragon: but, perhaps, that would have made him less fit for his appropriate destination.

Before I take leave of the good old man, I must say a word or two on my application of your remarks to him. I certainly can claim no rank for John Wesley as a writer, if he be tried by any accustomed standard: but why is it so? merely

because he preferred what he thought utility to every other consideration in the world. A critic, therefore, who is at once severe and superficial (two qualities not unapt to meet), will, of course, deem his writings a worthless farrago, and himself a wild rhapsodist. Readers of another cast, however, at once pious, liberal, and discerning, will, I conceive, be well rewarded for taking some pains to separate John Wesley's gold from his dross. What I have said already may serve to shew this: but the particular, which will strike, even at first view, is, how he continually enlivens even the most solemn subjects with all the variegated stores of his memory. I cannot say the execution is in almost any instance perfect, yet I know not where the path of strict religion is so uniformly strewn with flowers; classical beauties, strokes of innocent pleasantry, lively observations on common life, allusions to historic facts and characters, ancient and modern—whatever things, in fact, could be resorted to for amusement, by a pure and elevated mind, appear here, without the least diminution of their native cheerfulness, in the train and service of evangelic piety. They are seen, I own, as in a careless and most unfinished sketch, but a sketch by no common hand, in itself original, and furnishing invaluable hints to those who are capable of following and improving on the design. And may I not add, that the man himself, not as the leader of a religious fraternity, but as an individual and a Christian, is well worth attention, as being, in himself, one of the happiest of mortals? Though his journal is as strange a compound, in



some respects, as the world ever saw; yet, as exhibiting himself in his daily course for sixty-five years (and such a course!), I honestly own, I hold it to be invaluable: amid labours and difficulties, such as no other person of like habits has, in these latter ages, encountered, his own happy mind diffuses round him a continual cloudless sunshine: he looks for no pleasure, yet who ever enjoyed more? His self-government and superiority to indulgence, are equal to those of the anchorite; yet, his relish for every innocent delight that comes of itself in his way, is so lively, that he might be envied by the most systematic voluptuary. In short, I doubt if ever before there was such an association of mental ease, vivid taste, undamped pleasantry, unfettered conversation, universal enjoyment, with the purest primitive piety; and, as I saw and loved all this in the living man, so I rejoice to see it, however strangely, yet unequivocally and luminously, recorded by his own hand.

If I should, after all this, be asked, where the real character of John Wesley's piety may be best seen and judged of? I answer, in his hymns; which, though not without their blemishes, contain views and expressions of the true evangelic religion for which I know but one human parallel—the matchless Liturgy of the Church of England.

I trust you will fully understand that, in these lengthened remarks, I have not been gratifying my feelings toward my friend (except consequentially), but dwelling on what I conceive a most important and very advanced link in the chain of Providence, which is drawing human nature

onward to its destined happiness. I can only say, that I am not conscious of having strained any point, or exaggerated any feature. But how far my observations are valuable must depend on the general justness of my theory of progression—a theory, by the way, that seems to have been held by Baxter, is pretty strongly intimated by Butler, and actually maintained by Law, bishop of Carlisle. The book written on the subject by the last-named writer, is ingenious and interesting; but he and I widely differ in our view of particulars. Probably you knew the work. I must return, however, not to my old friend, of whom I have said enough, but to make a remark on his external system, which, as yet existing in great strength of number, must not be passed over.

My persuasion (already intimated) is, that John Wesley's destination related eminently to the Established Church; probably, however, not in a way of direct impulsion, but of remote influence. If the former was intended, it evidently failed; whatever increase of piety the Establishment has derived from Methodism, coming rather from Mr. Whitfield than from Mr. Wesley. A friend to whom I read some of the above remarks, suggested that, supposing my views of the subject right, it was most reasonable that, in any effect to be produced on the Establishment, the lower principles should come first into operation, and prepare it for the higher influences, which, in the mean time, have been advancing, under a rectifying process, toward more perfect potency. I wish this may be just; indeed, I trust that, in

the end, it cannot fail to be realised; but appearances just now, in England, seem almost to threaten that the Establishment will, ere long, die a natural death. Dissenterism, I am ready to think, never was so powerful or so extended, except at the time of the civil war, as it is at this day. If this goes on, what will it not grow to? I doubt, too, whether both parties within the Church are not alike busy in the work of dilapidation: the anti-fanatics stimulating those already without, and revolting more and more persons within; the men called Evangelical, cherishing Dissenterism without intending it, by teaching piety in a way which disposes much more to extemporary than to liturgical public worship; by diffusing doctrines which cannot cordially coalesce with our different services; all of which, being formed upon the earliest models, and derived from the most Catholic sources, are only Augustinian so far as Augustin was Catholic, and are actually Anti-Calvinistic. (To prove this last position, I would only ask a consistent Calvinist, whether he could reconcile to his ideas of truth, the doctrine of deadly sin in the Litany? I must observe, that this was one of the expressions which the non-conformists protested most zealously against. No wonder; they saw it drew a doctrinal system after it, the most hostile to their whole theory that could be conceived.) But the consequence, I presume, has already been, and will be, that whenever such a minister dies, or is removed, and a minister of an opposite way of thinking succeeds, those who were the attached followers of the former minister



fly off forthwith; and, if they cannot attend some neighbouring minister, they get an independent minister of their own. If, then, these facts be really so, what result can we look to, but a gradual melting away of the parochial congregations? and should this proceed to its extent, the painful issue is not difficult to be anticipated.

I have already, however, expressed a confidence, from which I feel no inclination to swerve, that our worship, instead of sinking entirely, would finally become the general model. The natural recommenders of this worship are, undoubtedly, the clergy and other eminent members of the Establishment. But, though their failure (common to them all, though from very different causes) may retard the object, and may even, as once before, produce a temporary external depression; still, if the counsel be of God, man cannot overthrow it. The obstinacy of one generation may occasion a circuitous wandering through the wilderness; but, in due time, the promised land will be approached, and possessed: and it will be seen, that if human perverseness or folly defeat one plan, it is only to leave room for another still more illustrative of Divine wisdom and goodness. In my application of this reasoning, I may, possibly, be too sanguine; but I certainly think I perceive a very substantial change slowly taking place amid the great body of Dissenters, which, if it proceeds, as my hopes presage, will, at length, bring them round to a truer Church-of-England spirit than ever their conformist ancestors were possessed of; and thus re-attach them, on plenary principles of truth, to that worship, from which

sincere, but partial, principle had induced them to withdraw. I have strong grounds for believing, that, for some years past, Calvinism has been losing ground amongst the English Dissenters generally. You might infer this, from the single fact of Hall having written as he has done, without losing any portion of the regard of his brethren. This change, then, (which has been distinctly stated to me by a dissenting minister of the best discernment and most extended observation), I trust, is taking place, not from laxity, as formerly, when the result was Arianism or Socinianism, but from enlargedness of mind, without loss of pious principle. If so, the result will be a proportionate approach to, and at length the arriving at, true philosophy and true Catholicism, (in other words, a sound and thorough knowledge of the Scripture, and a discriminative acquaintance with the various circumstances, practices, and doctrines of the Christian Church); and, when these are attained, a distaste for the unsettled, fermentitious, half-animal methods which they had, till then, pursued; and a relish for more fixed, more sober, more truly spiritual habits and employments, will grow up in their minds: they will then distinguish between the low views of Augustin and Calvin, and the holy and happy eminence which is pointed to, and dwelt upon, by our Saviour and the apostolic writers: they will discover, with surprise and regret, that, instead of "leaving first principles, and going on to perfection," they had stuck to milk, and, systematically, rejected strong meats; had refused to be any thing but babes, and repelled every idea of that full age,

wherein the senses are exercised by use, to discern both good and evil: they will be sensible of all this, and they will wonder, not without honest shame, that these true glories of Christianity were actually retained and exhibited, in that scheme of worship which they had despised, as low and formal; nay, that they have been preserved, and taught with effect, so as, seldom or never, to be without living witnesses there, when it was statedly banished from large portions of the Visible Church, and, perhaps, nowhere else distinctly taught. They will see, with admiration, that the Church of England obtained and kept this high prerogative by such means, and against such opposition, as to bespeak, first and last, a special interference of Heaven: they will be struck with the fruitless attempts of pious men to have what they deemed blemishes removed; and will perceive that, had those persons been gratified, and had an infantine and unsettled service been adopted, instead of our full-grown and fixed services, the Christian Church might have lost its single rallying point—its only remaining providential standard of perfect Christian piety. Of such discoveries, the consequence will be infallible: the substance, the platform, all that is primitive in the Church of England, will be valued only below the Scriptures: it will be valued for its matchless usefulness, and loved for its intrinsic excellence. Improved upon, as *it* has improved upon the ancient Liturgies, it may be; but, while the Church militant lasts, its substantial features, and all its leading parts, must rise in estimation, in proportion as Christians understand that



Divine Word, whose full light this polished mirror has so exquisitely, and so exclusively, reflected; and as they penetrate those plans of Providence to which this unrivalled apparatus has been so profoundly subservient.

Thus, as I hope and trust, will the Catholic Church of England be either opportunely preserved, or speedily and effectually restored. In the mean time, instruments may be working toward this end, where such a result is neither intended nor suspected. For example, the Wesleyan Methodists (whom, I told you, I had to remark upon) may, by their very secession from the Establishment, be doing it the best service of which, in their present circumstances, they are capable. Nothing, you know, can be more opposed to Calvinism than their principles. What, then, can more aptly tend to neutralise Calvinists, than *such* a mass of Anti-Calvinists being dispersed among them, and intermingled with them. The dispersion is the consequence of the secession: the intermixture is further secured by multiplied occasions of joint agency, Bible and Missionary Societies, &c. But what strikes me particularly, is the method by which the Wesleyan Methodists seem to have been secured against being the assimilated, rather than the assimilators. In their primitive state, they were sufficiently defended against Calvinistic contagion by the strong principle of practical and experimental piety, which, like a heart-pulse, beat at their centre; and a further guard arose, from their adherence to the Established Church on its primitive rather than on its Protestant side: I mean, to the

spirit of its Liturgy, which breathes perfection, rather than to the apparent language of some of the Articles, which seems meant to conciliate weaker brethren. Their early piety, however, from various causes, appeared to decline, and a spirit of secession began more and more to shew itself: in these circumstances, an adoption of Calvinistic tenets might have been reckoned upon as a most likely event. But, to preclude the possibility of this, Mr. Fletcher seems to have been provided. His polemics come in, as if at the very critical moment, to supply the tottering fence of inward and spiritual piety. He meets a taste for argument, just commencing with a new species of dialectics, in which the accustomed weapons of Calvinism are turned against itself; and are so formed, as to be wielded with sufficient confidence by those who have little skill, and less learning. This arrangement of Providence (as I take it to be) has already had some effect; and, I imagine, (though without noisy contention), will have more and more. Along with this, another more kindly operation, from the same Methodistic source, seems going on. The hymns of the Wesleys are entering, more and more, into Collections made for Calvinists; and cannot fail to promote what I described my hope of in the foregoing paragraph. I was much struck with observing, in a Calvinist hymn book published, six years since, at Doncaster, that more hymns were taken from the Wesleys than from any other composer; but what pleased me most was, that, after other apologetic remarks, it was stated, that, "in describing and exciting the stronger passions and exercises of the mind,

Mr. Charles Wesley seemed to have surpassed all that went before him ; nor," say the editors, " need we except, perhaps, any that has hitherto followed him." They say Mr. Charles Wesley, when they should have named both ; for they take from both. The observation, however, if considered in connexion with the several matters I have been stating, both gives and receives strength. " The stronger passions and exercises of the mind," which those hymns are said to describe and excite, are, substantially, those higher movements of inward piety which I have supposed meant by the temple worship : a growing taste for this, I, of course, regard as a most happy prognostic of all I have been anticipating. Is it not wonderful, that the strongest Calvinists now in England, should be the serious clergy ? Honest men ! they think it the doctrine of the Church ; and are resolved, it seems, not to question it ! Did you ever hear of the priest that Erasmus tells of, who had miscalled a word in the mass for many years ; and though the word, as he pronounced it, had no meaning, he positively refused to quit his old practice ? I do not, however, mean to jest with the good men : besides, it may be providential.

My great gratification, however, is, that something, in a much happier shape than appears either within or without the Church in England, seems to come forward amongst us. We have a few,—some of the clergy, some of the laity, small, indeed, in number ; but, in spirit, in principles, in a sound union of truths — of strictness with liberality, of rationality with spirituality — they are such



as I can find no exact parallel to in the history of the Church. They are little more than beginners in, I conceive, a very new path indeed: a path, soundly philosophical; yet, I trust, evangelically humble: a path, in which first principles are duly and deeply valued; yet, the maturity and perfection of Christianity recognised cordially, and, I hope, sincerely pursued: no sect-like peculiarity, except in "having no fellowship with" any "unfruitful work of darkness;" yet, an unfeigned and truly Catholic tenderness and regard for all, however circumstantially diversified, whose hearts are upright. If what I see commencing should, by the Divine blessing, spread through our land, I think the result would be something more perfectly Christian, more competent to stand by its own strength, and spread through its own excellence, than any thing the world has yet witnessed. This has, I own, a very great air of fancifulness; but, I ask,—when, in any number of instances together, has spirituality been completely united to rationality? Has it not been the grand obstacle, hitherto, that these two leading principles of right conduct have been, almost constantly, acting apart, and even in opposition to each other? Might we not, then, apply to their re-union, what St. Paul says of the future junction of the Jews with the Gentiles? The separation has not been quite unlike; for it may have been permitted for necessary purposes, so long as the Visible Church was to derive a material, perhaps rather its greatest outward, support from the prejudices; and the Invisible Church, at least, an indispensable aid from the

passions of the ignorant and illiterate. “ But if” (to use St. Paul’s language about the Jews) “ the casting away” of rationality has been, in some sense, “ the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of” it “ be, but life from the dead ?” In fact, whether my foregoing ideas be founded or not, I must say, that what I now perceive is, strictly, such an advance upon John Wesley’s views, as on my theory I should hope for. I believe I may add, that my old friend’s system has not been without its influence on the present resuscitation, and that the individuals I refer to are fully sensible of it.

I have long been convinced, that Christianity can no more spread in any sectarian or dogmatic form, than it could have spread in union with Judaism. Among a few it might, by those means, spread even more advantageously ; as we see the Jewish rites gave cohesion and compactness to the people who embraced them, while they, no less, revolted the world. So long, therefore, as the keeping up a principle to be diffused afterward, was the object, the Jewish rites formed the casket in which the treasure was preserved. In like manner, while the preservation and continued reinvigoration of the mystical leaven, rather than its transfusion, has been the thing aimed at, the old plan has been, in some measure, revived ; and every social aggregation of pious persons hitherto, if at all zealous in their co-partnership, has been, more or less, a sort of little Judaism, distinguished by observances and peculiarities ; and, by these, kept separate from the surrounding world. This brings

me back to ground already touched upon ; that is, into the wilderness. Happy that, along with this letting down of the Church, in so many instances, it was, also, as steadily kept up in a few ; which few were, most strictly, the pledge and sample of better times : for, prophecy joins with good sense in shewing, that they who have worshipped God in his holy temple, are not to withdraw from the temple and join themselves to the Church in the wilderness ; but, the latter is to come up out of the wilderness and re-unite itself to the temple. The Holy City, that is, the Church, Visible and Catholic, restored and re-illumined, is, uniformly, the scene on which all the great and glorious schemes of mercy are to be realised : that is, as I conceive, sects and societies must merge into establishments, in consequence of the minds of men being enlarged, and their moral circumstances being improved, and Christianity being better understood and more deeply possessed, before truth and piety can be effectually diffused among the nations, or throughout any nation. In fact, when we see a piety that fully understands itself ;—soberly and unpretentiously feels its own strength ;—which, therefore, follows every indication of good sense, without timidity, competently satisfied that it sees its path, and positively certain that it has no inclination to overstep it ; then, and then only, I conceive, we see that which can safely trust itself on the open side of the trellis, or could do good to the world, were it to venture itself in it. It is obvious, that, of such piety, establishments will be the natural sphere, as, hitherto,



they have been the soil of almost all that has yet appeared of it.

This leads me to mention, what I cannot pass over, that after our blessed Saviour, in his series of parables (St. Matthew, xiii.), has, in his first parable, described the Apostolic Church, or the Church in its commencement ; in the second, the Church in its mixture ; in the third, the Visible Church in its extension, the result of that mixture—Divine Wisdom making the devil's work a means of the greatest possible good ; in the fourth, the Invisible Church gradually permeating and assimilating the Visible ; he proceeds, in the two next, to recognise, and most wonderfully delineate, the two different methods in which this great work is carried on : the former, that of the treasure hid in the field, corresponding, with astonishing exactness, to the wilderness system ; the latter, that of the pearl, answering no less accurately to the temple worshippers. In the former, religion acts with an infectious energy ; individuals are, therefore, surprised into the impression of it, when it was least in their thought ; in the latter, there is no such infectious energy ; it is only found by him who makes it the great business of his life. In the former, there are inseparable adjuncts which must be taken along with the treasure ; it is deposited in a field, the purchasing of which field is the only method of coming at the treasure ; that is, as I humbly conceive, he who was impressed with religion, by Paulicians or Lollards, by Puritans, Pietists, or Methodists, felt himself under an absolute necessity of uniting himself to them, in order to enjoy the

blessing he had discovered among them: in the latter, there is no room for surprise, no subjugation to attendant circumstances; it is a work of self-direction, of discrimination,—the man knows what he is looking for, and his fixing on his object is the act of his judgment as well as of his inclination; he seeks with circumspection, he appreciates with wisdom; it is a goodly pearl he is in pursuit of; he obtains itself alone, without appendage or clog, he does not purchase a casket along with it. How beautifully does this represent the case of him who has had no teacher, but providence without and God's Holy Spirit within, leading him by proper means (the sacred word and the writings of holy men, and his own meditations on them) to instruct himself, and to seek further and more internal aid from God himself, instead of having recourse to human aids, and, consequently, coming into subjection of mind to them! How delightfully is an orient pearl of the utmost value pitched upon to represent the high, happy, pure, and glorious privilege (unalloyed even in a circumstance) which in this way is attained to and enjoyed! The blessing is, indeed, invaluable, and hitherto it has been rare: we see, by our own observation, that, though Christianity has thus been kept in honour, the Church could not thus have been kept in strength. The wisdom, therefore, of the two ways is admirable; and they who have the happiness of being led in the nobler and less trodden path, instead of despising the lower, but more popular path, will, if they judge aright, feel their own happiness redoubled in the thought, not only that

present and individual benefit is thus far more extended, but that a plan thus graciously arranged in its progress, must be most glorious in its issue. It is to be added, that emotions are (most appositely) attributed to him who finds the treasure; but with him who obtains the pearl, all is calm and rational: both, however, become possessed of the blessing on the same literal terms; the one, no less than the other, sells all that he has, that he may make the purchase.

One word more about Ireland. It has been thought a very lamentable thing, that the Roman Catholic religion should have retained within its pale so large a portion of our populace: so far, certainly, as this has arisen from misconduct, positive or negative, the wise over-ruling of Providence implies no excuse for it; but the fact itself may be reflected on with some consolatory feelings, since, probably, to this very cause may be owing, that the Irish Protestants are less disposed to practise hostility toward each other; the remaining strength of the Roman Catholic religion is evidently the great means of checking contention.

I think it will yet serve a more striking purpose. I have little doubt that a time will come when the Roman Catholic clergy of Ireland will, in a body, propose to conform to our Church; and, possibly, they have been providentially reserved with a view to their doing so, as no means could be easily thought of, more likely to strengthen the original characters of our Church, when they might be in danger of being effaced through time, than such an addition to it; it would involve a most direct



reverting to first principles, the Anglican Church having grown originally out of the very feeling which would then be in operation, namely, a solicitude to throw off flagrant errors, without relinquishing any thing truly valuable. I conceive, as I hinted already, that the general tendency of Protestant Churches has been to go too far from the Roman Catholic Church: not content with recurring to a more primitive standard and purer times, they have generally, either at the first or since, set up a standard of their own, in which pious antiquity has been but little considered. Our Church has escaped all this; but it might not continue to do so, if providential aids were not furnished. I cannot but persuade myself that an eminent aid will be what I have mentioned; an increased portion of learning will dispose the Roman Catholics to reason on what they see around them, and to make comparisons between their own habits and principles and those of the established religion. The result of all this will, probably, not be speedy; but I cannot doubt its eventual certainty. Happily, when they are capable of making a fair estimate, they will see before them that very temperament, that reconciling medium between all extremes, which rational and honest minds, feeling the necessity of a change, yet fearful of changing too much, and anxious lest any certain principle should be parted with, would naturally desire. While, therefore, the Catholic features of our Church will be, in the case I am supposing, the sources of most satisfaction, as well as the strongest attractives, they will acquire new

importance and increased interest from such a powerful accession of adherents and admirers. Besides, such an event never could take place without a good deal of previous discussion, by means of which the real doctrines and genius of our Church would come to be better understood, even by those already adhering to it, than they have ever yet been ; and its ascendancy in men's minds and hearts might be so established as it had never been before, nay, and where it never had been established before, that is, not merely here or in England, but in Scotland also,—a country, which even now is giving the most direct evidence in favour of the English and Irish Establishment, by that audacious tone of infidelity which has resounded and is resounding from its metropolis, and which, on such inquiry as the case calls for, (that is, sober, deep, philosophical inquiry), will, I doubt not, be found imputable, in an eminent degree, to the creed of the country being revoltingly dogmatic, and its public worship unfixed, unimpressive, unengaging, untasteful, unlovely, except when individual wisdom and piety make it otherwise.

I mentioned early, my idea of the great usefulness of that attachment to primitive piety which has been the characteristic of all devout Romanists. But there is a special movement which must not be passed over : in order of time, it should have been adverted to sooner ; yet, perhaps, it may be more clearly spoken of, from having been delayed : I mean Jansenism. If this pious co-partnership had served no other purpose than the producing such writers as it has done, it would be entitled to

the veneration of the whole Christian Church: but I see it in a still more important point of view, as connected with that progressive system which I have been endeavouring to illustrate.

You recollect in how important a point of view I have regarded Augustin: I must say, however, that I do not consider the remarks I have yet made as, by any means, doing him full justice. I have called him the great Doctor of grace, next to the Apostles; and I must now add, that I have given him this title, not only because no other individual in the Church so fully deserves it, but because, I conceive, that what Augustin has done in this department, he has done exquisitely. His excesses are easily separable from his excellences; and when the latter are viewed in themselves, they furnish, in my mind, the best key to St. Paul's leading doctrine, in his two Epistles to the Romans and Galatians, that the world has ever seen.

Augustin's grand principle is, that a man is no further righteous than as he loves righteousness, but, that when once the love of righteousness is thoroughly formed within him, it is like a profuent perennial fountain, spontaneously discharging itself in a variety of streams—all the virtues, as he finely shews, being nothing else but this love adapting itself to varying circumstances; this love, if genuine, is no other than the love of God, who is essential righteousness, and the choosing and adhering to him as the sovereign good of our souls: to this love we are brought by grace alone, (he would say, irresistibly; I would say, not without our own concurrence), which grace is an



operation of God, an influence, making us in love with that which is good. The special effect, therefore, of this grace, is a pleasure which draws our heart towards Divine things, and enables us to keep the commandments. The love thus wrought, is of course our true moral righteousness, and, consequently, it is by working this love in us, that the grace of the Gospel makes us righteous before God: it is, also, to be observed, that a most essential result of effectual grace, in St. Augustin's view, is prayer. This is with him, as with Herbert, "God's breath in man returning to its birth." He that begins to love righteousness, will manifest that love, by imploring righteousness from its only source—"Behold he prayeth," was the test of St. Paul's being a true convert.

Such were the foundations that St. Augustin laid: the adjuncts which he associated with them, to make them yet more secure, I do not here concern myself with, being convinced, that the substance of the work is so admirably done, as to place the doer of it, in this particular respect, next to St. Paul himself, to whose leading idea I think he has done unparalleled justice. I have been ascribing philosophy, I mean tendencies toward, or actual measures of the philosophy of the Gospel, to divines of the other class: but I must say, there is the very truth (I do not say the whole truth) of the Christian philosophy here. In fact, I seem to see the commencement of a magnificent structure, in which, not only the foundations are laid, but the superstructure so far proceeded in, as to shew the order and style of architecture, and to

give an idea of the symmetry, as well as the grandeur and richness of the design ; but, from some much to be regretted cause, it has stopped there, and has gone on no further. I am obliged to suspect, from examining and comparing the epitomes in Dupin, of Augustin's various writings and their dates (as far as they have been ascertained), that these noblest ideas of our saint, were the first he formed ; and that his best views of them, are those given in the first stage of his Christian course, before he began to be polemical. The substance of them he never lost, I am sure ; indeed, he distinctly recognises the principles I have stated, in all his future works ; but he does not, to all appearance, follow them up, he does not dwell upon them ; on the contrary, he trifles pitifully, and seems disposed to talk about every knowable thing, while the one thing is but now and then returned to, and too speedily passed by. I ground these last remarks on his principal work, " Of the City of God ;" in the whole of which, a serious reader is as much disappointed, as he must be pleased with several particular parts of it.

As I said, then, I am obliged to consider Augustin as laying a noble foundation, and presenting the idea of an incomparable design, but not proceeding with it ; and too often appearing to verify St. Paul's picture of a foundation undeniably good, with a superstructure of wood, hay, and stubble. St. Chrysostom, on the other hand, may be compared to one who collects the best possible materials, gold, silver, and costly stones, but as if rather to have them in readiness for those who

shall be fitted to use them at some after period, than for his own actual purpose: as a builder-up of the Church (for no one appears to have succeeded more nobly in building-up himself), he certainly had not Augustin's philosophical understanding; and, as surely, Augustin wanted his winged and almost seraphic soul. The Latin Father had consummate skill; but he was deficient in elevation of spirit: the Greek Father had the most elevated spirit; but its soarings are undisciplined, though most sublime. Their talents were great in their several ways; they would be entitled, I conceive, each, to a place in the selectest company of men of genius—I do not know which we could best be without—I love Chrysostom most; but I greatly value Augustin. Between them, they make up, as I have already said, a scheme which approaches to the perfection of Christian wisdom.

I, therefore, consider it as very remarkable, that while Divine Providence was raising in England a band of Chrysostomians (not avowedly such, I grant, but more substantially agreeing to this character than any who had preceded them), there should be a company of strict Augustinians formed in France, by whose means the views and principles of their great patron should be distinctly and luminously revived, and placed in the full view of the Christian world, with every advantage that great and united abilities and learning could furnish.

I cannot but observe, also, that there was just such a difference between these two providential movements, as the respective nature of the different objects required. The great function of Chry-



sostom having been spirit rather than truth, there was no necessity for any literal adherence to a model. It was enough, that the same spirit should display itself, without any strict imitation of a master, or acknowledgment of discipleship. But, where truth (rather than spirit) was to be re-investigated and retraced, there was need of exact attention of literal adherence. The question was, what were the sentiments of Augustin on certain definite points: the answer to which, must be precisely accordant with the authority referred to, in order to its answering its purpose.

Such a retracing of the theological scheme of Augustin was so much the more necessary, as his Protestant followers had materially varied from their teacher. Their grand doctrine of justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ, seems not to have entered into his thoughts: I am by no means sure that he would not have been ready enough to adopt it, had it occurred to him, with any impressiveness, when under those weaknesses, which he describes in the tenth book of the Confessions, and which are given pretty largely by Milner. He had, however, studied the text of St. Paul too accurately, to leave room for such an idea; which, indeed, I believe, no one had then thought of. In St. Augustin's view, the word justify meant, either to make a person righteous (in the strict moral sense), or, when he was thus made righteous, to approve of him as such; as God, in the creation, first said, "Let there be light;" and then saw that the light was good. He, therefore, considered faith as justifying a person, not

instrumentally, or as laying hold of Christ's righteousness, but as a qualification, or inherent principle; divine in its origin, yet ours, as a moral habit, and valuable in the sight of God, as a prolific root, pregnant with love, and all the graces into which love distributes itself. If, in thus explaining his doctrine, he at all departed from St. Paul, it was, I conceive, in speaking more about love, and less about faith, than St. Paul. St. Augustin had, doubtless, a very philosophical mind: and, therefore, on the whole of this point, I cannot but think his sentiments invaluable; yet, St. Paul was a still better philosopher than he; and, therefore, there is, in St. Paul, a height of accuracy which his great follower did not equal. St. Paul appears to have been made acquainted with every fold of the mind, and every recess of the heart. In this, his Omniscient Teacher alone stands above him. In every turn of expression he shews himself (I soberly think) the most consummate philosopher but one that ever was in the world. But, probably, a fuller expansion of St. Paul's ideas than that given by Augustin, would not then have been useful; and, I conceive, its justness, as far as it does go, makes it of very great importance still. It is of importance to be assured, that the first and fundamental principles of inward Christianity admit of being explained with most satisfactory clearness; and that, when so explained, nothing can be more simply moral, more rational, more strictly philosophical: that all the truth of natural theology is recognised and established: that all the just ideas of heathen sages respecting man's nature, and his

chief good, are realised, and rendered practicable : that, consequently, to believe in Christ, and to commit our minds, and hearts, and ways to his guidance, influence, and government, is not to sink our reason, not to coerce our judgment, not to contradict every natural idea, and counteract every natural tendency ; but, that it is to follow our real nature, to exercise the highest reason, to embrace the very essence and end of all genuine philosophy. It is of importance, I say, to learn this from one who, of all ancient writers, agrees most in other matters with those modern theologists, against whose misconceptions, and consequent misrepresentations, the Gospel-method of making us acceptable to God, and bringing us from the state of sin to a state of grace, needs to be thus vindicated.

In setting aside the simple and beautiful idea of justification, implied in Augustin's system ; namely, that God, having first, for the sake, and through the grace, of Christ, made us truly and inwardly righteous, he accounts us such, because, through his influence, we are such, really and substantially ; and in substituting, in the room of this moral justification, and a moral faith, the imputed righteousness of Christ, and an instrumental faith,—I do not say that they actually broke down Augustin's carved work with axes and hammers ; but, I certainly think they planted briars and thorns of the wilderness so thick about his structure (which, as I observed, though well-built, was not high-built), as to conceal it from view. This was, no doubt, wisely permitted, and real good may have resulted from it ; but, when better times are approaching,



in which there will be a fitness for purer truth, it might be reasonable to expect, that whatever had been radically and lastingly executed in God's great work by earlier artificers, should be brought to light, and seen in its proper point of view. This, I conceive, would be peculiarly probable, when an essential part of the work had been done with unrivalled excellence, and principles indispensable to the right accomplishment, not only of that part, but of all subsequent parts of the fabric, singularly exemplified. We cannot, therefore, but observe, with admiration and pleasure, that this is done, most distinctly and most happily; it being the professed object of the Jansenists to call the public attention to St. Augustin's doctrine of grace, and to clear it from all the rubbish of time, that it might be in the power of all to ascertain the real nature of the doctrine, and to judge for themselves of its truth and importance. How fully and faithfully they have performed the task, I need not mention. They could hardly have done it so well, if they had not embraced the theoretic excesses, as well as the practical excellences, of their master.

When this last-mentioned movement of Providence is added to all the others which have been noticed, I cannot but think that our helps for coming at the central consummate truth of the Gospel may be considered as complete. In the great department of holiness, we have a Chrysostom, in the first instance, exhibiting and enforcing every high and holy attainment with sweet simplicity, with delightful cheerfulness, with majestic sublimity; but we, after some time, see these

beauties and glories beclouded with mysticism: and years—nay, centuries—roll on, without producing a single writer (as far as my acquaintance with the fact enables me to pronounce) that does any thing like full honour at once to the elevation and the rationality of Christian piety. At length the Cambridge-men arise, and unite both these excellences with unexampled success. The mists which had so long enveloped all the higher grounds of spiritual religion, appear no longer. In their writings, we are invited to ascend, by having a prospect opened before us, as luminous as it is sublime. In fact, they alone prove the fact of progression; for, they are such writers as had never before existed, none before them having been so learned, so philosophical, so sober, and so solid, in maintaining full-grown Christianity;—a truth, which, above all other truths, needed such a defence, its friends hitherto being weak, and the great majority, even of sincere Christians, its enemies. In like manner, in the department of grace, Augustin lays down the noblest principles, and teaches what may be called the philosophy of conversion, with a distinctness, and a consecutiveness, in its substance, not to be improved upon, and, therefore, ever worthy to be studied and adopted. But, what the earlier and later mystics were to Chrysostom, the schoolmen and the Calvinists have been to Augustin; and he, consequently, needed no less to have his real sentiments investigated, and once more exhibited in their own appropriate form. This, as I have said, has been admirably done by the gentlemen of Port-royal; who, as they were the contemporaries of

the Cambridge-men, and employed in a strictly similar service, though in a different, yet intimately-connected subject,—were astonishingly on a level with them in talents and learning, while equals to either could scarcely have been elsewhere found.

I have largely enough stated John Wesley's attempt at a union of the two departments; I have now only to add that, in my mind, he has produced into fuller view a link which lay too much concealed in Augustin,—I mean faith: and in this, I conceive, John Wesley has done important service; clear conceptions in such matters being in value next to right feelings, the latter needing the guidance of the former at every step, and gaining ground when so guided far beyond what, without a miracle, they could otherwise attain. But, then, John Wesley is somewhat confused in what he says about faith; and this again, I conceive, may be most effectually corrected by viewing it in the light afforded by the Portroyal writers. The doctrine of grace, as I have already hinted, came to John Wesley through a Lutheran or Moravian medium. By these Augustin's views never seem to have been distinctly apprehended; forgiveness being their great object, and inward righteousness, divinely communicated, being his. John Wesley did not himself advert to this fact: his heart corrected every error that found entrance into his understanding; and, conscious of this, he was less disposed either to examine his ideas or guard his language. Perhaps, his mode of speaking of faith was precisely what best suited his auditories, and it is what we can detect at once.



I have now brought my digressions pretty nearly to a close. I have only to observe, that if we are candid, diligent, and discriminative, we have greater aids than any who have gone before us. With these curious varieties to resort to, and to compare, we may penetrate the mine of Scripture with much more pleasure and much more benefit than any but the Apostles themselves ; and, while we advance ourselves, we may do justice and honour to that heavenly volume whose excellences hitherto have been despised and rejected, not more, perhaps, from the depravity of the world, than from the deficiency of even the best-meaning interpreters.

“ The greater reverence I owe to the Scripture,” says Mr. Boyle, “ than to expositors, prevails upon me to tell you freely, that you will not do justice either to theology or (the greatest repository of its truths) the Bible, if you imagine there are no considerable additions to be made to the theological discoveries we have already, nor no clearer expositions of many texts of Scripture than are to be met with in the generality of commentators or of preachers. I meet with much fewer than I could wish, who make it their business to search the Scriptures for those things (such as unheeded prophecies, overlooked mysteries, and strange harmonies), which, being clearly and judiciously proposed, may make that book appear worthy of the high extraction it challenges (and, consequently, of the veneration of considering men), and who are solicitous to discern and make out, in the way of governing and of saving men revealed by God,

so excellent an economy, and such deep contrivances, and wise dispensations, as may bring credit to religion, not so much as it is Roman, or Protestant, or Socinian, but as it is Christian. I am willing, however, to grant, that it is rather for want of good skill and good judgment than good will, that there are so few that have been careful to do right to the reputation of the Scripture, as well as to its sense. And, indeed, when I consider how much more to the advantage of these sacred writings, and of Christian theology in general, diverse texts have been explained and discoursed of by the excellent Grotius, by Episcopius, Masius, Mr. Mede, and Sir Francis Bacon, and some other great men, than the same places have been handled by vulgar expositors, and other divines,—I cannot but hope that, when it shall please God to stir up persons of a philosophical genius, well furnished with critical learning and the principles of true philosophy, and shall give them a hearty concern for the advancement of his truths; these men, by exercising upon theological matters that inquisitiveness and sagacity that has made in our age such a happy progress in philosophical ones, will make explications and discoveries that will justify more than I have said in praise of the study of our religion, and the Divine books that contain the articles of it: for these want not excellences, but only skilful unveilers: and you should as little think that there are no more mysteries in the Books of Scripture, beside those that the school divines and vulgar commentators have taken notice of and unfolded, as that there are no other mysteries in the book of

nature than those which the same schoolmen (who have taken upon them to explain Aristotle and nature too) have observed and explained.”—BOYLE’S *Excellence of Theology*.

I have been large in quotation, because I consider these passages, coming from so sound, so well exercised, and so pious a mind, to be entitled to more than common attention. I will not assume, that it bears me out in many of the particular ideas I have been suggesting; but I conceive it gives a singular countenance to the general notion of a progressive plan, and to the supposition of Christianity having been hitherto but partially apprehended, and of times of greater light, and more extended view, being yet to come, in which Christianity, from being better understood, will possess a credit and a glory, not as yet easy to be even anticipated in our thoughts.

I now return to the point touched upon in the second page (and the beginning of the third) of the fifth sheet, from which I have made, I fear, a perplexed kind of wandering. The matter I have gone into sprung up, a good deal at least, as I wrote. I had an outline of it in my mind before, but I have not, in a former instance, put so much of it on paper; and, as I hinted this moment, much is of new occurrence: my way back must be forced, rather than natural. But still, if you will have the goodness to go back with me, you may, perhaps, find that we have not deviated wholly in vain. I hope some light may have been thrown on my supposition, of the substance of the visible Church within the Romish pale being still a part of



our Saviour's dominion, the last-mentioned movement alone (that of Jansenism) being sufficient to evince this ; and furnishing a pledge, that, though the devil's work within the Roman Catholic Communion will be signally destroyed, and the depraved agents in that work made examples of just wrath, still the Church itself will be only winnowed, and purified, and fitted for its place and proportion in the true Catholic unity.

I also observed, that it might possibly appear incongruous to limit the present tyranny to the mystical empire of the Beast, when we see the Protestant States of Germany, who may be deemed to have long since left that kingdom of darkness, falling under the power of the tyrant.—I seemed to be just beginning to answer this objection, when other matters presented themselves which have occupied me ever since. I left my point, however, with the hope of returning to it, furnished with fuller light : if I am not mistaken, this is, in some degree, the case. I think it follows, from what has been remarked, that the Romish Church, though the central scene of the Beast's reign, is not identical with the Beast's empire ; inasmuch as great movements, at least one great movement (last referred to), of our Redeemer's kingdom, has taken place within the visible pale of that Communion : which shews that, as a portion of the Visible Church, it is not abandoned by the Divine care or influence, and that (as was observed in the fifth sheet), though given for a time to be trodden down, it is the Holy City—that is, a part of it—still. But, if this be so, a further inference may be made, namely, that the

being without the visible pale of the Romish Church is no positive proof of not belonging to the Beast's empire; for if it be possible for persons to be within the pale of the Romish Church, and yet not be of the empire of the Beast, by parity of reason, persons may belong to this empire, though they are without that pale.

An observation or two may make this more clear. I have been taking some pains to shew, that Divine wisdom, in condescension to human weakness, has pursued a twofold plan in the Church—using one method to fit lower minds, and another to suit higher minds; the former productive of inferior Christians, but in greater number; the latter training up a much smaller quantity, but of superior excellence, and, I might add, possessed of a much deeper and more penetrating influence. To this twofold distinction I have referred the feeding of the woman in the wilderness, and the measuring of the temple, as figurative of the two classes at large; and, also, I have suggested that the two witnesses relate to the same distinction, being significant of two correspondent descriptions of teachers: I have, also, intimated that the two classes in question do, after all, imply, not two species of Christians, but merely two degrees, which have hitherto been cultivated apart, in compliance with the backwardness of human circumstances, but in due time will be united in the same individuals, so as to put an end to quality (except, still, of gradation) both in teachers and people.

What I now, however, mean to remark, is, that, as two degrees or two classes of goodness

are distinguished in the Holy Scripture, so, little less clearly are there two correspondent degrees or classes of wickedness. In that most solemn sentence pronounced, at the close of the Apocalyptic vision,—"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still,"—the gradation in both the opposite descriptions is as striking as the making them thus to tally with each other is curious. I need scarcely say any thing to shew, that as filthy rises above unjust, so holy rises above righteous. But I cannot pass over, that the original literally is, "he that is righteous (or just), let him be justified still; and he that is holy (or a saint), let him be sanctified still:"\* which terms, just and justified, being undeniably opposed to moral or practical unrighteousness, and as undeniably conjoined to a higher degree of moral or practical goodness, to which they answer, as describing a lower degree; I conceive it inevitably follows that the terms, justify, and the justified, have in the writings of the Apostles a substantial morality of meaning, which is systematically denied to them by many modern theologians. But this by the by: my object is to state that, as the Divine benignity appears to have made distinct provision for the two classes or degrees of religion, so the ruler of the darkness of this world has, as far as we can judge, pursued his malevolent

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\* A French New Testament, now lying before me, expresses it exactly, "*Que celui qui est juste, soit justifié encore; et que celui qui est saint, soit sanctifié encore.*" By the moral meaning of justify, I wish to convey much the same idea as I mentioned to be St. Augustin's.



purpose with a wonderfully similar discrimination. He, too, has his lower and his higher system; the former fitted to the ignorant vulgar, the latter adapted to more enlightened and exercised minds: may I not add, the one employed for subjugating the people of a darker period, the other put in operation when minds are opened and views enlarged—in the language of the prophet, when many go to and fro, and knowledge is increased?

In a word, he, too, has, as it were, his dogmatic and his philosophic system—that is, anti-Christian superstition, and still more anti-Christian infidelity: the first an anti-wilderness scheme; the latter, an anti-temple scheme; each set against its opposite, with all the apt adjustment of malignant sagacity.

That the enemy of human happiness would thus counteract Christianity was the more probable, as we find his dominion presenting this two-fold aspect among the Jews at the period of our Lord's appearance: Pharisaism and Sadducism answering with exactness to the superstition and the infidelity which, in these latter days, we see exhibiting a like difference; and, probably, where a mischievous occasion would demand it, and circumstances leave full room for it, not less ready to exhibit a pernicious co-operation.

If we accurately knew the history of the period I am referring to, we should, most probably, find that Pharisaism had been the earlier system, and that Sadducism came forward in proportion as the Jews became intellectual. This we have witnessed precisely in the more recent policy of our adversary: and, as Sadducism did not then supplant

Pharisaism, but rather united with it, in the common cause of crushing truth and goodness, so neither have we any reason to suppose that the activity of infidelity will preclude that of superstition at the present day. The kindness shewn by infidels towards the grosser features of popery has been often adverted to, and is notorious.

My first inference, then, is, that the empire of the Beast to whom the Dragon gave his power, is the united dominion of superstition and infidelity; one or other of these being resorted to, as persons, times, or circumstances, make fitting: but as, in the course of things, ignorant times precede, and enlightened times follow, so the more direct rule of superstition comes first, and that of infidelity comes after. My next inference is, that if those who have renounced superstition afterward embrace infidelity, they relapse as effectually into the mystical empire of the Beast as if they had never left it. I leave you to judge how far this last remark applies to the Protestant states which Bonaparte has overrun. It is most striking, that that country whose king was Voltaire's chief associate, has been the scene of the tyrant's most unqualified triumph. The fact is, that infidelity has been Bonaparte's most effectual auxiliary; it has passed on before, dissolving all the ties of society, and reducing the rock of public safety to a heap of shifting sand. Whether the tyrant employs his arms or his gold, his precursor has equally prepared his way: the thorough infidel is as pusillanimous as he is profligate; stupid obduracy may make men thoughtless about death, but let

baseness present what is gratifying to the animal, and let virtue imply self-denial, and some continuance of hardship; and then it will be seen, that there is no more genuine coward than the infidel.

I own, therefore, I look for nothing but prostration, wherever the pestilent vapour of infidelity has diffused itself. Russia, I hope, has been but superficially touched; and is therefore fitted for keeping the tyrant in check, until the Divine purposes shall be fulfilled by him; and then, I trust, completely crushing him. Europe probably required a flood to roll through it, in order to cleanse it from the rubbish of many a century: and the all-wise Providence may have placed Russia in the north of Europe, like an immovable rocky barrier, against which, the flood when it passed its appointed boundary, might beat itself into foam.

Perhaps, indeed, Russia is itself to be served by its repercussive exertions: as yet, it is but the raw material of an empire, stupendous in magnitude, but sluggish and unformed: as, then, we cannot suppose it would be what it is without a special appointment of Providence, and as the vast outline bespeaks a proportionately great design, we need not doubt but that the work will proceed; and, reasoning from experience, we cannot conceive any means more likely to rouse and animate this torpid giant, than the being stimulated in its extremities by the points of French bayonets.

If the effluence of the North, in its utmost barbarism (made strangely emigrant by a secret touch



from Heaven), produced effects never to be done away, what may not yet be expected from the same quarter, already so wonderfully, though, as yet, most rudely, cast in the mould of empire? If its wild violence had effects so lasting, and, eventually, so salutary, may not proportionate good, without accompanying evil, be looked for from its regular energies, when its organization shall be completed, and its powers elicited?

I should hardly entertain these flattering thoughts, if it were not that some remarkable circumstances concur to raise hope, as well as interest feeling. The remarkable transfer of the imperial seat from Moscow to Petersburg, by which it has become a member of the European system — the singular zeal for improvement, which has, from the time of Peter the First, been manifested by its government; not uniformly, perhaps, but to a degree, on the whole, unequalled elsewhere — the nature of its religious system, dark and superstitious for the present, I allow, but having a direct derivation from, and, of course, radical connexion with, that noblest portion of ancient Christianity, the Greek Church: in consequence of this, though dark, through lengthened and hitherto remediless ignorance, yet not debased by any such tyranny, nor corrupted by any such traffic, as have been the scandal of the Romish Communion. In the latter, there appears to have been continued sin against light; while the Greek Church has resembled him who “knew not, when he did things worthy of stripes.” When, therefore, reflection has latterly awaked in the Romish

Church, there was so much wilful systematic profligacy visible on every hand, and such a retrospect of successive enormities, as could not fail to excite disgust and horror, even at Christianity itself, where there was not knowledge to distinguish the substance of religion from the abuses of it. In the Greek Church the case will be far otherwise : the mental eye, once opened, must pass back, through many centuries, before it will find any distinct, much less interesting object ; but, beyond the dark valley, it will discover a luminous and noble prospect ; it will see the immortal labours of a Gregory Nazienzen, a Basil, a Macarius, and, above all, a Chrysostom,—names which every virtuous and learned Christian has venerated from the times in which they lived to the present hour, but which enlightened members of the Greek Church will contemplate and recur to with delight and joy, as being so peculiarly their own. Here, therefore, it appears to me, that a triumph is as evidently reserved for Christianity, when intellectual light shall have fully diffused itself, as the reverse might have been apprehended, and did actually take place, when day at length broke into the dark recesses of the papal prison-house.

With respect to Russia, in particular, hope becomes strengthened when one adverts to the increasing intercourse and connexion with England. It is striking to see this providential tie becoming more firm and close, for where else could it be formed with a shadow of like hopefulness ? The English Church is most certainly at this day the only substantial representation of Christianity in

the genuine Greek spirit. It displays this so identically, as to make it impossible not to see the close agreement, wherever the fact meets with a just faculty of discernment. What, then, can be more natural than that, as intercourse grows between the two countries, an understanding should also take place, at length, between the two Churches; that, as the English language becomes more generally known, and English writers on divinity (of the genuine kind) get into the hands of the Russian clergy, and our Common-Prayer-Book, in particular, catches their attention, a kind of ecclesiastical relationship should begin to be discovered; with this difference, that we possess the features of their ancient and venerable Mother Church, far more perfectly than themselves; and that, therefore, in order to become what their Church was in its best and purest times, they must regulate themselves and their public worship by what the English Church exhibits now. If all this should take place, and the Russian Empire extend into Greece, in consequence of the Turk being expelled from Europe, I should think that the dawn of a new day was rising upon the world; and that, on the supposition of our political connexion, the ecclesiastical one would at length grow up. I can doubt on one ground only — the want among ourselves, generally, and among the clergy, in particular, of any adequate portion of a zeal according to knowledge.

But I must go back from this pleasing speculation to one more awful and more at hand. I supposed a kind of parallel between the Devil's



rule of superstition and the spiritual wilderness, and also between the dominion of infidelity and the spiritual temple. But is there not another wonderful parallel? Christ, we have seen, has his two witnesses, answering, as I have supposed, to the twofold system; and, be it well observed, the Dragon has his two beasts, corresponding, with like suitableness, to his twofold scheme. The apparent difference is, that the witnesses are co-existent, while the beasts are successive: but even here the real dissimilitude is not so great; for the two witnesses, I conceive, have a succession, as well as a co-existence; and the two beasts have something of a co-existence, as well as a succession. What I mean is, the witness for grace has hitherto had far more numerous followers than the witness for holiness; there having been, hitherto, as already observed, a much greater multitude of dogmatic, or wilderness Christians, than of philosophic, or temple Christians. Now, it may be hoped the latter will multiply; but, if they do, it will surely not imply any neglect of the real doctrine of grace, but a mere reducing of it to its proper proportion—a foundation, not to be rested in, but built upon—a means most valuable, but in order to an end. Thus, as I said before, the Church in the wilderness will come up to the temple—not the temple go down into the wilderness. On the other side, superstition has not wholly existed hitherto without infidelity; nor, as I hinted above, can we now suppose that infidelity will wholly reign without superstition. There was infidelity at Rome, and at Florence, and throughout Italy, in

no little strength, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries ; and Buonaparte's Catechism shews us that there will be no lack of it in France in the nineteenth century. Still, however, hitherto superstition has been the reigning power. Now, and now only, we behold a new dynasty, originating in such an organized system of infidelity as the world had never witnessed, clearly congenializing with that system, and to this movement, maintained by its influence, and nourished by its results.

The point, then, I come to, is, that Buonaparte is probably much beyond what he has a notion of — “ a second Charlemagne.” That monarch seems the founder of the empire, represented by the first beast, whose function, doubtless, has, ever since, been to support the dominion of superstition. And I am ready to think Buonaparte stands precisely in the same relation to the new infernal polity of infidelity.

Having come thus far, I can venture little farther ; the awful future being in the hand of God. The passage in the Apocalypse, however, gives some prospective light ; and conjecture, humbly exercised, may find encouragement from other prophetic scriptures, as well as assistance from analogy and existing circumstances.

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If the above remarks have any foundation, a most interesting question presents itself. How may Britain be expected to fare during the apprehended season of darkness ? The consolatory idea

in Dr. Miller's Letter comes in here with peculiar appositeness. I acknowledge we have no right to be over-confident, but, I trust, the cheering prospect which his analogical reasoning points to, is not wholly a *terra in nubibus*. I should hope that many of the observations I have been making in the foregoing sheets tend to give additional probability to his encouraging conclusion.

The fact of England being that favoured spot, where Christian truth has attained its highest degree yet exemplified of fulness, of purity, of energy, of harmonious combination; and this invaluable eminence attained in consequence of the profoundest arrangements of Divine Providence, exhibiting unparalleled features, and working their effects in ways that are, in themselves, honourable to human nature, and delightful to human feeling. All this, I say (of which the detail would be voluminous), may be regarded, with humble expectation, as implying a pledge, that he who has favoured us from the beginning will favour us to the end; yet, who can presume to be certain that we, too, may not be awfully agitated, if not for a time depressed? That no unmixed or unrestrained judgments will fall on our land, I cannot but be humbly confident; but, through what particular steps we shall be led to a state of improvement, which, above all other nations, we are called to, and which must be attained in order to make the return of fruits in any measure answerable to the long and much diversified labour bestowed upon the soil, is far above human conjecture. But, though I see much to be both negatively and positively done amongst



us, I do not give up cheerful hope of our Jerusalem being still watched over and guarded, and, at length, made more than ever “a praise in the earth.”

What damps such ideas is this,—I do not, as yet, see in England, among even a small number, any fair specimen of those matured views of full Christianity, which so many plans of Providence have been at work to raise us to: I believe sincere goodness has been seldom more widely diffused; but who, at this day, presses, wisely and spiritedly, what St. Paul urges on the Ephesians, chap. iii. 14, and following verses? There is much talk, and honest talk, about religion; but who is it that duly adverts to, and dwells upon, St. Paul’s distinction between the carnal Christian—the babe in Christ, that, in too many things, “walks as men;” and the spiritual Christian, who judgeth or discerneth all things, and he himself is judged of none? Nay, among the countless religious tracts which, during the last ten or fifteen years, have come forth, do we meet so much as one instance of a serious, intelligent inquiry into the difference between milk, in St. Paul’s sense, and what he calls strong meat, or into what he meant by that wonderful saying,—“We speak wisdom among them that are perfect?” Few as these words are, they establish a distinction between two characters of Christianity—a low and a high: those to whom this wisdom cannot be spoken, because they are not able to bear it, 1 Cor. iii. 1, &c., and those to whom it is suitable, because they are full-grown, spiritual, perfect, Heb. v. 14; 1 Cor. ii. 6, 15. But,

if there be such a distinction, does not the obvious nature of it, not to speak of the urgencies of Scripture, enjoin on us the deepest attention to it? I say the obvious nature of it, for, if the spiritual life has its childhood and its manhood, what a frustration of its purpose must it be, to remain ever in the one, without so much as a serious inquiry about the other? The choice of such an analogy is, evidently, not arbitrary. It is used because there is a radical sameness of law in the two cases: nay, most probably the natural fact was adjusted, with a distinct reference and designed subservience to the spiritual object. How shocked should we be at seeing a single numerous family of dwarfs — eight or ten from sixteen to six-and-twenty years old, but not one more than three feet high! Who would not feel for the parents of such a family? And how much more, if, to the diminutiveness, was added the mental deficiency of infancy? Yet, what would this be, compared with a like blight in the immortal spirit? If this latter could be seen in all its bearings, it would speak for itself so tremendously, as to make all attempts at illustration superfluous. How, then, must angels be affected, when, in their repeated, and, no doubt, solicitous reviews of the interior pale, they see little else than dwarfs, and even something of a prevalent determination to be dwarfs, and nothing but dwarfs, in consequence of a very general persuasion, that Christians in this world must be such to the end!

Probably, for a long series of time, it could not well be otherwise; but, sure I am that state of

things now touches its natural term, if it be not unnaturally protracted, and intended happiness be not repelled, as the Jews in the wilderness refused to march to Canaan. But, the truth is, the Church has had its long wandering till many a generation has passed away. It is now, I conceive, called, as if a second time, to go up; and, most certain I am, that we of South Britain and Ireland, who have enjoyed much more rest, and escaped, in a great degree, the perils of the wilderness, are specially bound to advance onward, like the Reubenites and the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, who, we read, went forth armed before their brethren when they passed over the Jordan.

You will understand fully that I do not speak here merely of those practical efforts, in which, I dare say, many individuals are intently engaged. Experience shews, that these may be sincerely attempted, and yet be attended with little fruit. I am anxious, not merely for the improvement of practice, but for the radical correcting of principles; because, I am persuaded, that the latter must first be effected, before the former can be reckoned on with any certainty, or to any adequate amount. In fact, I am anxious to see the substance of what Boyle looked forward to, be realised there, where, judging from experience as well as reason, it must be realised first—the British Isles being hitherto the chief *incunabula* of substantial, intellectual improvement.

Probably I shall not live to see what I am wishing for, but I have not the smallest doubt of



its taking place, and that at no very distant period. Some "interpreter, one of a thousand," will come forth and throw so new and so bright a light both upon human nature and upon Scripture, and will so convincingly demonstrate that there is a genuine philosophy (most profound in its principles — most sublime in its results — yet, when laid open, so self-evident as to be irresistible), which is common both to human nature and Holy Scripture, and which constitutes the most exquisite harmony between them, that capable minds (and such are multiplying) will yield themselves to the view thus opened upon them with a fulness of satisfaction, and a completeness of acquiescence, never, as I conceive, till then exemplified. Some pious persons have supposed the probability of a second Pentecost, and that nothing short of this could effect the promised extension of righteousness and peace. I own it strikes me very differently. I believe the full establishment of the Redeemer's kingdom will grow out of the perfect ascendancy of good sense on the one hand (towards which many unprecedented movements of Providence are advancing us), and a right understanding of revealed truth on the other; which blessing, as I said, will, I suppose, appear the result of extraordinary penetration in the mind of the discoverer; nothing very wonderful, except wonderful felicity of discernment, seeming to accompany it. I do not say that the discovery will as expeditiously run over Europe as Galileo's did in his "Sidereus Nuntius;" but most confident I am, that the truth will spring forth, and will be diffused, and will meet

a reception worthy of itself, and of the errand on which God has sent it from heaven to earth.

“ Man,” says Whichcote, “ is not at all settled or confirmed in his religion, until his religion is the self-same with the reason of his mind ; that when he thinks he speaks reason, he speaks religion ; or when he speaks religiously, he speaks reasonably ; and his religion and reason are mingled together ; they pass into one principle ; they are no more two, but one ; just as the light in the air makes one illuminated sphere, so reason and religion, in the subject, are one principle.”

What is here, as I conceive, most justly stated to be the perfection of the individual, will no less be necessary to the moral renovation of society ; but, in order to this blessed effect, reason and truth must be each fitted to unite with the other. Reason must be unprejudiced and undebased ; truth must be unmixed and intelligible. How the former will be effected, we cannot yet pronounce ; we only know, that with God all things are possible, and that already common sense shews striking marks of increased clearness and strength. How truth will be freed from obscurity, as well as from drossy admixtures, we may easily conceive, as nothing further will be necessary than a clear apprehension of the contents of the sacred volume. There remain, unadulterated and unclouded, the oracles of God ; and so soon as men have eyes to see, they will appear as a book newly unsealed, the view of them will be so very different from what it had ever been before.

Here, then, I rest. In the word of God I

seem to myself to see a depth of wisdom and of excellence in a great degree yet unexplored. I see, as I conceive, a divine philosophy, which needs only to be known and understood, in order to a triumph of pure Christianity over all false views of it, or prejudices against it, as decided and as universal as that which has been gained by the Copernican over the Ptolemaic system. In fact I see, or think I see, what the most cultivated taste will contemplate with delight; what the most exalted genius will bow down to with unfeigned veneration; what the profoundest mind will attach itself to as its most congenial study; and this not from mere poverty of spirit, or a humiliating sense of sin (necessary as these may be to the well-being of the individual), but from the same kind of conviction which made Newton recognise a presiding and a sustaining God in the system of the universe. I have now only to add a few observations, by way of guarding what I have said.

I have made frequent use of the words *perfect* and *perfection*; but in doing so, I mean merely to follow the guidance of Holy Scripture. I annex to these terms no extravagant meaning, and am particularly far from adopting the mode of explaining them which John Wesley sometimes used. I understand them exactly as John Smith understood them. In fact, I consider them as describing the higher class of Christians as contradistinguished from the lower: perfect Christians, therefore, in my sense, are strictly the same as I have called temple Christians; for a full description of which class I should refer you to Lucas, were it not that, with all his beauties, he is, I think, inconsistent;



and while, in different parts of his second volume, he nobly raises the character of the perfect Christian, he strangely sinks it in others, particularly in the fifth chapter of the second section; still, in numberless passages, he exactly and happily illustrates what I mean. For instance, in his second page, he says, "Conversion begins, perfection consummates the habit of righteousness. In the one, religion is, as it were, in its infancy; in the other, in its strength and manhood: so that perfection, in short, is nothing more than a settled habit of true holiness. According to this account of religious perfection, he is a perfect man whose mind is pure and vigorous, and his body tame and obsequious; whose faith is firm and steady, his love ardent and exalted, and his hope full of assurance; whose religion has in it that ardour and constancy, and his soul that tranquillity and pleasure, which bespeaks him a child of light and of the day; a partaker of the divine nature, and raised above the corruption which is in this world through lust."

It is, indeed, most worthy of remark, how perfectly all our genuine Church-of-England divines agree in maintaining this matured state of grace, as if, almost, it were something of a different kind from the merely regenerate state. This last they conceive to differ from the awakened state which led to it, in this, that the inward struggles common to both, terminate, not as before, in too frequent defeat, but in victory; such, at least, as implies escape, if it does not furnish cause for triumph. But, in the maturity of grace which they describe, though there is constant need of watchfulness and

wise self-jealousy, the struggle is over, and the mind lives in religion as in its native element, out of which it could not exist. You will see at once that, by genuine Church-of-England divines, I mean those who were spiritual, without any leaning to Calvinism; and in all such I think you will find an almost uniform language on the very important points which I am speaking of. Look, for instance, at the beautiful passage which concludes the second section of John Smith's first Treatise (pp. 16, 17); and if you have Jeremy Taylor's Sermons, you will find much to the same purpose in that on "Growth in grace." You will find him observing, that unless in the earlier stages of a state of grace, we perpetually fight against our vices and repel our ghostly enemies, and stand upon our guard, we must remain for ever in the state of babes in Christ, or else return to the first imperfections of an unchristened soul and an un-sanctified spirit. What he means by remaining for ever in the state of babes, he tells us under the next head. "Some persons there are," says he, "who dare not sin; they dare not omit their hours of prayer; and they are restless in their spirits till they have done; but they go to it as to execution; they stay from it as long as they can, and they drive, like Pharaoh's chariots with the wheels off, sadly and heavily;" (only compare this with the second of the Letters to a Nobleman, vol. ii., and the last of the Letters to Mr. B. in Mr. Newton's 'Cardiphonia'); "but he who is grown in grace, and hath made religion habitual to his spirit, is not at ease but when he is doing the works of the new

man ; he rests in religion, and comforts his sorrows with thinking of his prayers ; and in all crosses of the world he is patient, because his joy is at hand, to refresh him when he lists ; for he cares not, so he may serve God ; and if you make him poor here, he is rich there ; and he counts that to be his proper service, his recreation, his reward."

Dr. Cudworth still more expressly distinguishes the two states of real, though ungrown piety, and that which is matured and confirmed. "The first degree of evangelical righteousness," says he, "is a principle of new life infused into the soul by the spirit of Christ through faith, inclining it to love God and righteousness, as a thing corresponding to its nature, and enabling it to act freely and ingenuously in the ways of God out of a living law written upon the heart, and to eschew sin, as contrary to a vital principle. But there is a second degree of victory over sin which every true Christian ought, not only to look upon as possible, but to endeavour after, and restlessly to pursue ; which is such a measure of strength in the inward man, and such a degree of mortification or crucifixion of our sinful lusts, as that a man will not knowingly and deliberately do any thing that his conscience plainly tells him is a sin, though there be never so great temptations to it."

In dwelling, therefore, so much as I have done, on a lower and a higher state of grace, I have insisted on nothing but what has been distinctly urged before. I believe I could also shew, that there is a substantial agreement between the Church itself, and these its bright ornaments ; all



the ancient parts of our Common-Prayer-Book, being marked as strongly as possible with this *sursum corda* character, and describing continually the state of mind which is to be aimed at, as that of unbroken tranquillity, holy fixedness, and rooted and grounded love. In fact, I think this high view of piety is the most distinguishing characteristic of our Liturgy; and, in consequence of this, all our genuine divines have been led to understand the 7th chapter to the Romans as the whole Church understood it before St. Austin; and, indeed, as St. Austin himself understood it before he became polemical. The Church-of-England divines, whom I recollect at this moment as having given an opinion on this chapter, are Jackson, Hammond, Taylor, Cudworth, and Lucas: but all who have their general view, must, of consequence, agree with them in this instance. It is, also, a very remarkable fact (which, perhaps, I have already observed), that, in proportion as non-conforming divines have been liberal toward the Church of England, we see their own views of holiness rising. Baxter, Joseph Alleine, Shaw, and Howe, are striking instances of this; all of whom were nearly as much perfectionists as Cudworth or Lucas. Among modern non-conformists, no man so addicted himself to the study of the Church-of-England divines, as Doddridge; and the result was, that Doddridge was one of the truest perfectionists in the world. His interpretation of the 7th to the Romans has subjected him to the censure of some strong Calvinists, as if he had betrayed their cause. But when he explained

that passage, he formed his comment from his feelings no less than from his judgment. It was a pity that such uncommon excellence should have been obscured by that extravagant prejudice in favour of unrestrained self-direction in matters of religion. This not only made him, in spite of his sublime piety, a strong Dissenter ; but it made him, most oppositely to his intention, a cherisher of Arianism. A comparison of the Hymns of Doddridge, Watts, Kenn, and Wesley, would shew that Doddridge rises above Watts, from having caught the spirit of Kenn ; and Wesley is deep and interior, from having added to the Chrysostomian piety of Kenn, the experimental part of St. Augustin. Watts is a pure Calvinist ; Kenn is as pure a Chrysostomian. Doddridge is induced to blend both, and the effect is valuable and interesting : Wesley advances this union. He, too, adds the views of grace to those of advanced holiness ; but, having derived the former through a more unadulterating medium, he is uniformly practical and experimental ; yet not always rationally so. There is a prevalent interiority ; but it is sometimes mystical, and sometimes eager and passionate in sentiment, and not a little uncouth in expression. These obvious faults excite a wish for something far more perfect ; and yet, these faults apart, I certainly, as I said before, know no other equal specimen of pure primitive piety, or rather of scriptural *united* piety, except in our Liturgy. I cannot refrain from giving you two passages (as you may not be in possession of the Hymns of the Wesleys), to exemplify their prevalent principles.

Jesu, Redeemer of mankind,  
How little art thou known  
By sinners of a carnal mind,  
Who claim thee for their own ?

Who blasphemously call thee Lord,  
With lips and hearts unclean ;  
But make thee, while they slight thy word,  
The minister of sin ?

O wretched man ! from guilt to dream  
Thy hardened conscience freed :  
When Jesus doth a soul redeem,  
He makes it free indeed.

The guilt and power, with all thy art,  
Can never be disjoined ;  
Nor will God bid the guilt depart,  
And leave the power behind.

Faith, when it comes, breaks every chain,  
And makes us truly free :—  
But Christ hath died for thee in vain,  
Unless he lives in thee.

What is redemption in his blood,  
But liberty within ?  
A liberty to serve my God,  
And to eschew my sin.

The only exception I have to make to these admirable lines (for such I most cordially deem them), is, that in the last stanza but one, the assertion respecting faith is too absolute, different degrees of faith appearing here to be lost sight of. But that is not intended : all that is meant is, that



in proportion to the strength of faith, must exactly be its liberating power ; and in exact proportion to this power, our comfort. So much for the theology of those hymns. Now, one brief passage to shew the kind of evangelic piety which they contain.

Thou Lamb of God, thou Prince of peace,  
For thee my thirsty soul doth pine ;  
My longing heart implores thy grace,  
Oh ! make me in thy likeness shine.

With fraudless, even, humble mind,  
Thy will in all things may I see !  
In love be every wish resigned,  
And hallowed my whole heart to thee.

When pain o'er my weak flesh prevails,  
With lamb-like patience arm my breast ;  
When grief my wounded soul assails,  
In lowly meekness may I rest.

Close by thy side still may I keep,  
Howe'er life's various current flow :  
With steadfast eye mark every step,  
And follow thee where'er thou go.

I will just add two stanzas from another hymn.

Renew thine image, Lord, in me ;  
Lowly and gentle may I be ;  
No charms but these to thee are dear :  
No anger mayest thou ever find ;  
No pride in my unruffled mind ;  
But faith and heaven-born peace be there.

A patient, a victorious mind,  
That life and all things casts behind,

Springs forth obedient to thy call ;  
A heart that no desire can move,  
But still to adore, believe, and love,  
Give me, my Lord, my life, my all !

You will observe, it is the spirit of these passages I prize, without meaning to adopt every expression in them. That which pleases me above all, is their dwelling upon our Saviour as a source of vital influence, and not as an extrinsic ground of vague comfort.

On the whole, then, I rest on this persuasion, that, as Bishop Butler has expressed it, Christianity is “ a scheme, consisting of various parts, and a mysterious economy that has been, and is still carrying on by the Messiah, who is to gather together in one the children of God that are scattered abroad ; and that there is a plan of things beforehand laid out, which, from the nature of it, requires various systems of means, as well as length of time, in order to the carrying on its several parts into execution.” But, with deference, I differ from Bishop Butler in this, that he supposes the scheme wholly incomprehensible. He thinks so, because he conceives the completion of the scheme to belong to a future life. But in this idea, I conceive the great and good man overlooks the whole tenor of Scripture, and departs from his own beautiful principles of analogy, inasmuch as all the schemes of Nature, from whence he derives illustration, had their obvious completion, no less than their commencement and progress, within this visible sphere ; and, therefore, though it is certain that the strictly ultimate results of the

scheme must be referred to the immortal state ; yet, when the means, the movements, the connexions, the whole perceptible organisation, are derived from, and attached to, this world, nay, are, many of them, such as the removal from this world must terminate and dissolve ; and, as the very notion of progress implies not only a continuous operation, but a begun efficiency, good sense, and every analogy we can refer to, seem to unite in demanding that, where the organisation has long acted progressively, there it should, in due time, act perfectly ; that is, should attain its own perfection, whatever that be. This, I conceive, is congruous to all we see, and to every law of Nature that we can conjecture : when, for instance, we see seed sown, we look for a harvest in that very spot ; when we see an acorn planted, we conclude that, if the process of Nature goes on, there will be an oak ; and, to come nearer, when we see a building begun, there we expect the roof to be put on, and we admit, no doubt, that the conclusion of the work will be of the same nature with its progress. I think, therefore, the excellent bishop makes his appeal to ignorance much more than was necessary ; and I have humbly attempted to give a rude sketch of a more satisfactory procedure.

But if my ideas be founded, as I have more than once asked, so must I again put the question, Of what inconceivable consequence is our empire ? I leave this, however, to your thoughts, and will mention only one or two facts, and then take my leave.



LETTER TO J. S. HARFORD, ESQ. ON CERTAIN  
GREAT TRUTHS DWELT UPON IN THE EPISTLE  
TO THE EPHESIANS.

MY DEAR MR. HARFORD,

January, 1814.

You are very good to me, in having written a second letter, notwithstanding my apparent inattention to your first. It was, in truth, only apparent inattention. I am sometimes so coiled in a chain of thought, that I cannot quit it until I come to a natural break, unless at the expense of confusion, perhaps not to be re-adjusted. I was *so* occupied when your first letter reached me, otherwise I should have forthwith attended to your interesting queries. The determination has been ever since in full view; but time and thought have been employed in writing to certain friends in answer to letters on the Roman Catholic subject. You know so much of my mind, as to forgive me for yielding to this urgency. As you suppose, the determination of the House of Commons to give a friendly hearing to that great topic, has given me heartfelt pleasure. I must still feel anxiety until it be brought to a definitive issue, as every step now makes the next more critical.

For the kindness of both your letters I am unfeignedly grateful. That written in January lies on my table; and I willingly advert to the point

which you bring before me in its commencement,—the connexion of the 3d chapter of Ephesians with what I have maintained to be the ruling idea.

I think you, yourself, touch the truth of the case, when you suppose a close connexion, in St. Paul's mind, between the calling of the Gentiles and the grand consummation, and a deep subserviency of the former to the latter. In this light I have always viewed the Apostle's statement; and, instead of feeling the scheme disturbed by the introduction of this particular subject, I have entertained a persuasion, that we are thus made acquainted with the instrumentality chiefly relied upon by Divine foresight; and, therefore, exquisitely prepared by infinite wisdom. The calling of the Gentiles, therefore, not only, in my mind, constitutes a necessarily intervenient link, but eminently affords the most efficient machinery for accomplishing the destined object.

But it will be necessary strictly to ascertain what we are to understand by the calling of the Gentiles: I conceive it cannot mean the admission of Gentiles individually to the participation of spiritual blessings—this was an invaluable blessing, and the germ of all other blessedness. But, 1. There was in this nothing which could be called mystery: it was as plain and intelligible as any other feature in the Christian dispensation: it required some preliminary steps to reconcile Jewish feelings to the measure, but nothing to explain it. St. Peter accordingly speaks of it, in his immediately subsequent statement to the believing Jews, and in his discourse at the council of the Apostles and Elders,

in the simplest terms, as if it were a transaction of natural occurrence in the evangelic system, and within the compass of every man's understanding. 2. This expansion of Divine mercy could not have been said "to be not made known in other ages," as no part of the Gospel dispensation had been more largely predicted: Simeon (taught as well by the letter of prophecy as by the Spirit of God,) had called our Saviour "A light to lighten the Gentiles;" and our Saviour himself did not deem it necessary to preface, with long explanation, that unbounded commission,— "Go ye, and disciple all nations." Least of all, 3. Could St. Paul have spoken of his own part in this great arrangement as he has done (in the first ten verses of the chapter referred to), had the trust reposed, or the truth communicated, been nothing more than St. Peter had already been charged with. The expressions, though not importing exclusive communication to himself, seem clearly to imply a more unexpected and peculiar designation than would correspond to a simple continuance of that service which a Fellow-Apostle had, some years before, begun to perform.

On all these, and other accounts, which I will not go on to enumerate, I think we must attach some deeper and more pregnant sense to that admission of the Gentiles into the kingdom of Christ and household of God, which the Apostle here dwells upon: and such a sense, I persuade myself, will easily be found, if the entire import of this portion of the Epistle be duly attended to.

For this purpose, we must go back to the 11th



verse of the preceding chapter, and observe the terms in which the former excluded state of the Ephesians, as Gentiles, is described. The words used, place before us not merely spiritual, but ecclesiastical, and, if I may apply such a term, theo-political abandonment. They were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, as well as strangers to the covenants of promise; having no hope, as without promise; and without God in the world, as aliens from the commonwealth.

But the epithets here given will be best understood, when compared with their opposites, in Rom. ix. 4, 5. In this latter passage, St. Paul is mourning over the almost departed glory of his much-loved nation; and he seems to take a painful pleasure in enumerating the high distinctions which had made Israel illustrious. I think you will at once see the marked contrast between this passage and the other just referred to, in the 2d chapter of Ephesians: you will see, that exactly what the Jews had possessed, the Gentiles were destitute of; that is, that the latter wanted all those visible distinctions and beneficial institutions which had been, for so many ages, the invaluable inheritance of the one favoured nation.

As this is a main point, I wish you to consider it attentively. Read, if you please, first one of these passages, and then the other, (Rom. ix. 4, 5, and Eph. ii. 11, &c.), and judge whether it can be doubted, that the Jewish privileges, so affectionately dwelt upon in the former passage, were distinctly in the Apostle's view in the latter passage, and furnished the standard of his negative statement:

that the benefits recounted in the Epistle to the Romans, were those which the Jews possessed externally, and nationally, is proved by this circumstance, that external Jews only were, at that moment, in the Apostle's mind. He is grieving for that rejection and national overthrow which are at hand, and which he could almost be ready to avert, were that practicable, by a sacrifice of himself. He laments the impending ruin, be it observed, for the sake of those visible and national privileges. His taste and his devotion, the associations of his youth, and all the kindest habitudes of his life, made those features of his nation delightful to his mind, and clear to his heart; we cannot, therefore, doubt his meaning, when he speaks to the Romans: and I conceive he gives, as strictly as possible, the directly opposite view in stating the former condition of the Ephesians. But if so, it will follow (and I think every expression in the sequel of the 2d chapter strengthens the conclusion), that St. Paul ascribes to the Christians at Ephesus, and, by consequence, to the body of Gentile Christians generally, a transferred, or rather co-participant enjoyment of the Israelitish constitution; that is, of every thing in the Jewish Ecclesiastical polity which was solidly beneficial, or intrinsically lovely: every thing which served, on national principles, to diffuse religious sentiment through a whole people, and to preserve religious truth, unimpaired and unadulterated, through successive generations: every thing which tended to endear Divine worship to youth, and to inspire the feeling,—“ I was glad when they said unto me, we will go into the house

of the Lord:" every thing, in a word, which had been formed to make religion engaging, and penetrating, and permanently captivating to the whole of human nature; to individual man, and to the collective mass, inspiring common sensations of grandeur, cheerfulness, and tenderness, wherever there was capacity for such impressions, and laying hold of all by, at least, some sensitive tie; so that none could overlook the magnitude, or remain wholly unconscious of the attraction.

On such principles, the Jewish dispensation had been formed by the wisdom which knew what was in man. That it deeply answered its end, in spite of aberrations and apostasies, we know, by irresistible evidence. The raciness of Old Testament piety, especially in the inimitable and ever-blooming Psalms (upbraiding our Christian chilliness with a warmth which few ever pretend to rival; and, let me add, a happiness which, in some modern divinity, it has been a principle to discard), this matchless spirit (as yet, I fear, I may call it matchless spirit) of Jewish Catholicity bursting forth, even at the last, in the songs of the Virgin, of Zechariah, and of Simeon, and thereby shewing how it had lived and wrought, during the whole period, in all similar minds: all this, I say, implied a system of things not to be contemplated by such a mind as St. Paul's without cordial interest, and an instrumentality very unlikely to be wholly set aside under an improved prosecution of the same ultimate objects.

That this was the nature of St. Paul's attachment to Judaism, cannot be doubted: his enume-



ration of particulars puts the matter of his predilection out of all question; and, as we cannot suppose him actuated by childish likings, or mechanical habits, we must resolve his concern into some such sense of worth and benefit as I have hinted at. How deep that concern was, need not be elucidated. His language on this subject has been the wonder of the Christian Church. Doubtless, much passed through his mind (in interesting and heart-wounding detail) of Jewish history, Jewish celebrations, Jewish prospects. And the melancholy reverse of all that the Old Testament describes, and the Psalms exemplify, of God's own people filling God's own house with the voice of joy and thanksgiving, with triumphant gratitude, and still more triumphant anticipation—lowered before him like a night of clouds, which even the light of the Sun of Righteousness does not seem to have at once overcome. I conceive I am stating no more than the beginning of the 9th chapter to the Romans warrants. But, if such were the Apostle's feelings at that time when he beheld the calamity, but seems not to have possessed preponderant consolation, with what delight must he have penned the latter part of the 2d chapter to the Ephesians? Every expression here giving evidence that the Gentile Church, as now contemplated by him, presented a rich and delightful compensation for all that was to be parted with in the literal Judea and Jerusalem.

It is here, then, I mean in a systematic transfer and establishment of all that was permanently useful and intrinsically valuable in Judaism, that I

seem to myself to find the Apostle's mysterious sense of the calling of the Gentiles. As his words already adverted to, seem to admit of no other interpretation, so, in what follows, it is forced upon us in a way not to be evaded. The first expression, "were made nigh," is equivalent to, "were made Jews;" see the 17th verse, where the literal Jews are described by this expression,— "He preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh." But mark how this nearness was accomplished: by breaking down the middle-wall of partition; that is, not by disfranchising Jews, but by co-enfranchising the Gentiles: painful observances, which made the separation, are abolished. But all valuable privileges must be retained, when the benefit conferred consists in admission to the situation which the privileged class had, till then, exclusively occupied.

The Apostle conveys his meaning with additional clearness, in his beautiful metaphor of a building "fitly framed together," and growing "into an holy temple." The term in the original, which answers to the former of these two expressions (*συναεμολογουμένη*), could not be made intelligible by any single English word; nor can a paraphrase do it full justice: it gives the idea of the most perfect and comprehensive symmetry of parts, various from each other, yet forming one harmonious whole. The work, we are told, is to proceed to the last in the same exquisite order, until the chief corner stone shall have combined the two fronts (which it necessarily implies)—the Jewish and Gentile (the latter built upon the

Apostles, the former on the Prophets)—into perfect unity. If this idea be disputed, other strictly correspondent predictions are in readiness to support it; none more forcibly than Rom. xi. 23, &c. where not only a perfect union of the Jews with the Gentiles is announced as infallibly certain, under the figure of “engrafture;” but it is described to be “engrafture into their own olive-tree.” Thus, the two favourite metaphors of St. Paul aptly and most instructively applied to individual cases; 1 Cor. iii. 6, &c., are also, with equal felicity, employed by him to elucidate the collective destiny of the Church, by throwing on each other mutual light. If Jews and Gentiles are made one; if the former had already been nigh, and the latter are made nigh; if both form one commonwealth, and that the commonwealth of Israel; one household, and that the household of God; if both are co-harmonised as one and the same building, and co-organised as one and the same tree; then, what follows, but that all which was valuable or beautiful, useful or amiable, in the one great member, must equally be found in the other great member; and that, whatever was naturally fitted and eventually conducive to any intrinsically noble purpose in the commencing stage, could not fail to be retained and made operative in the more matured developements of the process.

But I must especially advert to one of the texts which you have quoted, as it is one on which I have placed peculiar reliance, “That the Gentiles should be *συγκληρονόμα, σύσσωμα, καὶ συμμετόχα* :” co-heirs, concorporate members, and



co-participants. Long attention to St. Paul's writings has convinced me that Jacob, when blessing the sons of Joseph, did not cross his hands more "wittingly," than this first of writers not only chooses words, but marshals their order, and adjusts their adjuncts. The measured structure and exactly regulated parallelism of the Hebrew Prophets and proverbialists, could not but lead the studious reader of the Old Testament into a habit of imitating; and we not only may suppose that there was a fitness in what thus grew out of a providential predisposition, but, I think, we shall see that no imaginable method of composition could have been more suitable to the matter communicated, or the effect intended. It was natural and necessary, then, that the style of the Old Testament should be prevalent in the New; and, as no feature is more conspicuous in the Old Testament than exact application and arrangement of words, it is reasonable to look for the same feature in the New Testament, and to give full credit to it when we find it.

I cannot, therefore, but conclude, that these three terms,—*συγκληρονόμα*, *σύσσωμα*, and *συμμέτοχα*,—are to be taken as most deliberately and distinctively chosen. They are all emphatically significant of coalescence, as if it were meant that the eye or ear should, as much as possible, be made to aid the mind in conceiving the idea of closest and most effectual combination. But the order, no less than the words, conveys important instruction: co-heirship comes first, as pre-existing in the Divine intention "before the foundation of

the world ;” co-participation comes last, as that which implies the accomplishment of the purpose : and between these is placed co-incorporation, as if to indicate the means by which the Divine intention is carried into execution. Being, from the beginning, co-heirs, they are, in due time, incorporated ; that, through the effectual working of the apparatus thus constructed, the united polity may, in the fulness of time, enjoy the inheritance allotted to it in the eternal councils.

That I do not swell the meaning of *συσσώμα* beyond its intended import, will appear from the statement in the fifteenth and sixteenth verses of the following chapter : the Apostle has told us in the fourth verse, that there is one body, as well as one spirit ; therefore, this one body must be that which had grown out of the co-incorporation : there being but one mystical body, this must be at once the *συσσώμα* of the third chapter, and the *πᾶν τὸ σῶμα συναρμολογούμενον καὶ συμπεριβαλλόμενον* (the “ whole body co-harmonised and compacted”) of the fourth. Let us, then, examine this most interesting representation. For what, under heaven, can be more interesting than to ascertain the nature, and understand the full import, of an idea, brought forward with such force, dwelt upon with such continuance, and heightened by such epithets ?

Observe, that the thing signified must be something visible and palpable : this is evinced by the term one body, as contradistinguished to one spirit. If there were an invisible church only, one spirit would have suitably and fully expressed

it; but, there being a body to be animated, as well as a spirit which animates, we must find a visible church to which the metaphor of body will as fitly correspond, as spirit answers to that unseen extension of living faith and predominant charity which constitutes the invisible church.

There is scarcely any metaphor which has more perfectly passed into a common appellative, than that of body; but no loose application of the term will be suitable here. The object described is a body politic of the highest order, combining the different characters of a household, a city, a commonwealth, a kingdom. As a household, it is *μεγάλη οἰκία* (2 Tim. ii. 20.): and, be it observed, by the way, to the utter refutation of independent churchmakers, even as a house admitting heterogeneous mixture; “In a great house there must be not only vessels of gold and vessels of silver, but vessels of wood and vessels of stone; and some to honour and some to dishonour.” As a city, it is *ἐπάνω ὄρους κειμένη*, and, being so, “cannot be hid;” that is, it possesses visibility as an inseparable property. As a commonwealth, or kingdom, it is represented by our Lord himself, under the same image which is used to illustrate the greatness of the Assyrian empire in the divine dream of Nebuchadnezzar; a tree to whose branches the birds of the air had recourse for shelter.

So much for its external definiteness and magnitude: its internal characters demand closer consideration. According to the Apostle, it is a body of the most exquisite organisation; a body of “many members,” but all adjusted to each other in “con-



summate harmony ; ” of vast extent, but so bound together, that neither time nor accident, no assault from without, nor disorder within, shall effect disjunction or fatal derangement. This infallible continuity, if not asserted, is implied ; for it is a growing body—it grows by means of its organisation,—and there is a destined maturity, “a measure of stature and of fulness,” at which it must eventually arrive. Its organisation, therefore, must be adequate to this intention, and must remain unimpaired and efficient, until the design be accomplished ; but even more than this is required in order to such an effect. The adjustment must be such, that not only part corresponds to part, and member co-operates with member at every point of time ; but period must correspond to period, and one stage minister to another stage, until successive results shall terminate in a perfect issue. This is expressly indicated in the former metaphor of a building, the whole of which is asserted to be co-harmonised ; that is, evidently, range with range, and each with all that had gone before, no less than each part of a range with all the other parts. But the metaphor of a human body contains the same idea : infancy, childhood, and youth, being all successively conducive to that full-grown maturity, which is the chief feature in this illustration.

I conceive, in this statement, I simply follow St. Paul, doing mere justice to his metaphor, without exaggeration or fanciful addition. But is not this also the description of what the literal commonwealth of Israel *was* on a narrower scale, and for a

less noble, because less mature, purpose? It, too, was “fitly framed together and compacted; by its civil and sacerdotal institutions, its twelve princes of the tribes, and its seventy elders, its high priest, and its inferior priests and levites.” In these appointments the Jewish economy had its shape, its solidity, its continuity. They were to it, at once, what both the bones and the vascular systems are to a living animal; while its temple worship, its significant services, its solemn commemorations, its various attractives, addressed to eye, ear, and feeling, as well as its more internal provisions — “the covenants, the law, and the promises,” — were the means and materials of its moral life and characteristic identity. As these establishments were divine, so the event justified their wisdom. Israel, in spite of its innate stubbornness, its senseless ingratitude, its multiplied rebellions, substantially answered its providential end. We trace through the Old Testament, not only the continuity, but the progress of the system. From first to last there is essential sameness along with circumstantial advancement; firmness of construction secured the one, aptness of apparatus effected the other. We may also perceive that whatever was attained in one age, became the means of fresh attainment in the next age. The Pentateuch, for example, prepared for the Psalms; these again for the prophets: yet each preparatory part remains as interesting, nay, more interesting, than ever; as, in consequence of its results, we discover its co-harmonic character, and thereby enter more fully into its depths, and are delighted with beauties till then unperceived.

But, do we not mark progress in the piety of individuals, as well as in the divine scheme? I do not mean in the number of instances, but in the quality of the piety. Is there not, for example, a depth, a tenderness, and a sublimity, in the religion of Daniel, to which earlier times afford no exact parallel? It may be said that the exiled condition of the Jewish nation made such as were disposed to devotion more devout than they otherwise would have been: still, there was advancement; and the chief means of this advancement was, as ever, the sacred institution of their country, mellowed by distance, and made touching by privation. Daniel himself prayed "with his windows open toward Jerusalem" (a powerful testimonial to the moral attraction of the Jewish system!); and the common feeling was, "By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept, when we remembered thee, O Sion!" Neither did a return to their own land weaken this affection. It grew in strength (in how few soever it was manifested) until it formed the grand preparative and immediate next step to Christian piety. Simeon and Anna afford evidence sufficient to verify this statement. But it has a far higher authentication: that saying of our Saviour respecting Nathanael — "Behold an Israelite, indeed, in whom is no guile" — says every thing of the true Jewish character that can be conveyed in language.

That such an effect could have been equally produced by less elaborate means, may be more easily imagined than proved. If we examine attentively, we shall see in each specimen of Jewish



devotion what were its elements and its nourishment; we shall have multiplied evidence that the visibility and prominence of the Jewish religion took an early, an extended, and a tenacious hold of the human mind; and that, as it could be overlooked by none, so in all who were capable of being impressed, the acknowledgment of its truth and importance became a rooted habit, almost a natural instinct. To those of higher mental character, the continued sameness of their establishment, through successive ages and perilous vicissitudes, inspired confidence and veneration. It was thus satisfactory to the understanding, while it was delightful to the fancy. The temple worship in its daily services, but still more in its anniversary celebrations, sustained and heightened these feelings of the mind and heart. In a rational view, every ritual performance was a witness of the authenticity of their belief, and the divinity of their religion; and the whole display so abounded in natural attractions, especially to the young and the susceptible, as to make even the apparently hostile propensities—the love of pleasure, of greatness, of novelty, and of beauty,—subservient to pious affection and devotional elevation. Thus, the whole soul, the whole man, became engaged and occupied; and the world—the otherwise tempting and almost resistless world—offered to the well-disposed Jew, on every hand, but, above all, in his loved Jerusalem, an ample store of antidotes to its own poisons. Every faculty through which moral contagion could enter was religiously laid hold of; every exhilarating and every soothing sensibility

was elicited and animated. To forsake a provision thus arranged would have been not merely abandonment of duty, but insensibility to enjoyment.

Such, I conceive, was the Jewish economy. Such the associations (we may with all humility believe) which made our divine Redeemer weep over Jerusalem; and such the images which excited those almost overwhelming feelings in the mind of St. Paul. In the transfer of this engaging system, then, we meet every thing which tends to compensate feeling; to harmonise the methods of Almighty wisdom; to meet the capabilities and claims of human nature. In such a transfer, therefore, I conclude, consisted one grand feature of the mystery; and it might well be accounted a mystery, since, to the present hour, it remains almost wholly unadverted to and unsuspected.

If it be asked, at what time and in what manner the analogical Judaism, which I am supposing, was made a part of the evangelic economy? I answer, that this appears to have been done by Christ himself. He (in his infinite wisdom) was pleased to lay a foundation, to which time and rising circumstances could not fail to add a correspondent superstructure. In establishing two solemn rites,—the one initiatory, the other continuative and confirmative (strictly analogous to circumcision and the passover); in appointing two orders of functionaries (the higher order evidently corresponding to the twelve princes of the tribes, and the lower order to the seventy elders); and lastly, in making his own death and resurrection coincide with one great Jewish anniversary, and the sending of the

Holy Spirit, with another,—our Lord, I say, in these remarkable and significant arrangements, gave at once to his church a definite character, and a lasting direction. That a resemblance to Judaism was intended, cannot be questioned. No single one of the three features might support such an idea; but their concurrence is invincible: and, on consideration, it will be seen that, supposing an analogical Judaism to be designed, more suitable means of realising it could not have been contrived. In point of fact, also, these primary appointments have been followed by as entire a Jewish system as Christianity could adopt; and, in proportion as this Jewish system has been departed from by any class of Christians, one or more of those first institutions have been tampered with or rejected. In human affairs it is certain that apparent eventuality gives no proof of intention; since, where short-sighted man is the agent, one thing may be designed, and its opposite take place. But this cannot happen in the agency of Omniscience. Here every the minutest event was foreseen, and every movement which led to it comprehended and calculated upon. To what conclusion, then, can we come, having before us the quickly assumed and still permanent Judaical characters of the Christian church (I mean its hierarchical, liturgical, hereditary, and national characters), and seeing, with equal clearness, the natural tendency of our Lord's actual appointments to the forming of such characters; and being assured that the appointments were made in the full view of the event; what, I say, can we conclude, but that the analogical Judaism of the Christian



church is derived from the will and act of its adorable Founder, and that it consequently forms an essential part of the great mystery of godliness ?

But it is material to observe that, while leading features only of the Jewish system are transferred (those which refer to human nature, and not to any transient state of society), even the features transferred are remarkably modified, so as to be fitted to the deeper principles and more exalted purposes of the Christian economy : for example, it would seem to have been the chief concern in the Jewish dispensation to establish a permanent priesthood : our Lord, on the other hand, appears primarily solicitous to form a well-regulated polity. The functionaries, therefore, appointed by our Redeemer, correspond to the civil rather than to the ecclesiastical establishment. It was a kingdom which our Lord purposed erecting ; princes, therefore (“ ye shall sit on thrones,” &c.), and elders of the congregation, are, in the first instance, expressly set apart ; “ He chose twelve,” and afterward “ He appointed other seventy also.” But was the priesthood wholly overlooked ? I conceive, far otherwise : it formed no distinct institution, like that among the Jews ; but it will be seen that there was a sacerdotal character united in the same persons with the theopolitical : at least, I hope to bring evidence in support of this position, which it will not be easy to invalidate.

Such a union of offices, it will be allowed, would be in strict consonance with what has undeniably existed in the case of our Redeemer himself. He is, at once, the king and the high priest of his

mystical Israel. In the literal Jewish state, these offices never met in the same person. But he who is a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedech, perfectly resembles his prototype, in being both "King of Salem," and "Priest of the Most High God;" we are also assured that this twofold dignity is to be communicated to all the faithful followers of our Lord: true Christians are, in the language of St. Peter, "a royal priesthood," *Βασιλείον ἱεράτευμα*; and St. John, in the Apocalypse, thanks the Redeemer for having made us "kings and priests unto his God and Father." Here, therefore, is a common resemblance of all the members to their head. But is there not, also, a special assimilation of the rulers and guides of the church, to the chief ruler and guide? The general designation just referred to implies no hinderance to a more eminent and more appropriate application of the same title. It is remarkable, that the same high appellations were given to the Jews; nay, it is God's language to them, as rendered by the Seventy, that St. Peter applies to Christians, *Ὑμεῖς δὲ εἰσεσθέ μοι Βασιλείον ἱεράτευμα καὶ ἔθνος ἅγιον*. *Exod. xix. 6*. As, then, this national dignity did not prevent the appointment of Aaron and his sons to a more peculiar priesthood, so neither can the sacerdotal dignity of Christians generally be adduced as an objection to a special priesthood, analogous to that of the Jews, in the Christian church.

But, is there any foundation for this idea in the New Testament? This may be justly thought the great question; since without this, analogies, however

plausible, might be deemed but the offspring of a warm fancy. I humbly think, then, that a special priesthood, subordinately assistant to that of the great High Priest, is clearly ascribed to the functionaries of the Christian Church by St. Paul; directly in one instance and indirectly in several others. The direct instance occurs in Romans, xv. 16; where the Apostle tells us, that this grace or privilege was given us by God, to him εἰς τὸ εἶναι λειτουργὸν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, εἰς τὰ ἔθνη, ἱερουργούντα τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἵνα γένηται ἡ προσφορὰ τῶν ἐθνῶν εὐπρόσδεκτος, ἡγιασμένη ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ. Now, though St. Paul alludes in these words to the “Alms and Offerings” which he hoped to be the instrument of conveying to the poor saints at Jerusalem, yet the expressions cannot be confined to this single instance: we must understand the Apostle as intimating that his high office fitted him for executing this service in a manner the most acceptable to God; not by any means, that this service gave the ground for those titles; on the contrary, it is as being thus signally distinguished, that he applies to them on the subject, ver. 15. What, then, is this distinction? It is that of Λειτουργὸς Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἱερουργῶν τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Θεοῦ: not Διάκονός, the usual word; but that more dignified and expressive title which is used on a few special occasions, and most eminently applied to Christ himself, as officiating in the heavenly sanctuary, analogously to what was done by Aaron and his successors, in the sanctuary made with hands — “we have such an high priest,” says St. Paul, Heb. viii. 1. 2, who is τῶν ἁγίων λειτουργὸς καὶ τῆς.



σκηνῆς τῆς ἀληθινῆς. The force of this epithet is, if possible, made yet greater by the first words of the next verse : Πᾶς γὰρ ἀρχιερεὺς εἰς τὸ προσφέρειν δῶρά τε καὶ θυσίας καθίσταται, "For every high priest;" therefore, λειτουργος conveyed the same idea. But the same mode of speech is continued in the subsequent verses : Christ, we are told, could not be a priest upon earth (that is, in the Jewish dispensation), that lower service having been otherwise provided for (ver. 4.); but as he is the mediator of a better covenant than that of Moses (the mediator of the old covenant), so proportionately hath he obtained a more excellent ministry (διαφορωτέρας τέτυχε λειτουργίας) than that of Aaron. It follows, then, that St. Paul, in declaring himself the λειτουργος of Jesus Christ, clearly conveys the idea of his being a priest subordinately, as Jesus Christ is a priest supremely; but, lest the single word should leave the point in any measure under doubt, he adds a word, used nowhere else in the New Testament, but always meaning the exercise of priesthood, Ἱερουροῦντα. You may examine "Pole's Synopsis," or "Suicer's Thesaurus," or "Schleusner's Lexicon," on this word; and, in spite of Protestant prejudices, you will find all agreeing in its sacerdotal import. It may be said, that the objective word, τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, will scarcely admit of such a sense in the active word which governs it: but, if the Gospel contains a sacerdotal department, which, I conceive, has been established in the observations just made, then to administer the Gospel sacerdotally (which is the very idea of ἱεροῦργειν το εὐαγγέλιον), involves nothing either incongruous

or obscure: it may require expansion, but not vindication.

But if this were needed, the indirect recognitions of the Christian priesthood in other parts of St. Paul's writings, would afford ample means. The parallelism, for example, between the priests in the temple, *οἱ τὰ ἱερά ἐργαζόμενοι*, and the ministers of the Gospel, *οἱ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον καταγγέλλοντες*, in 1 Cor. ix. 13, 14, implies a substantial sameness of office; otherwise, I conceive, there would not have been ground for that appeal to the reason of the Corinthians: "*Οὐκ οἶδατε ὅτι*," &c. Again, in the following chapter of the same epistle there is a remarkable passage, the full force of which is, possibly, seldom adverted to: I mean, that respecting the Lord's supper, 1 Cor. x. 15-22. It is remarkable, that this chapter begins with, at least, a virtual assertion of the main point which I have been insisting upon; namely, the analogical Judaism of the New Testament dispensation: a correspondence between the typical and anti-typical systems is made out with ingenuity as well as distinctness; and the conclusion of the statement is, that there are like dangers and like duties in the Christian as in the Jewish economy. But, observe to what particular instance the discovery is applied to the Lord's supper, and in what sense. Read the 16th, 17th, and 18th verses; attending especially to the last of the three, and judge whether we are not taught by the Apostle to esteem the sacrament of the Eucharist to be all, and much more than all, that the sacrifices, in their most solemn import, were, under the law. If the great

Christian celebration was not sacrificial, what relevancy would there be in so emphatic a reference to "Israel after the flesh" eating of the sacrifices, and thereby participating of the altar? Is it not plain, that the Apostle supposes such a sameness of import as makes the one case a decisive standard for the other? And is it not equally obvious, that, in his view, the Lord's supper and Pagan sacrifices were opposed to each other, as acts; the intention of which is similar, but the object contrarious? I conceive, this is the clear amount of what is contained in the 20th and 21st verses: and when the sacrificial idea thus proved to belong to the Eucharist, is enlivened and exalted by that mystical relation which it is stated to bear to the first of personages and first of transactions, ("The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?") What act can we imagine, purporting to be a sacrifice, that can have any title to that mysteriously significant appellation, in comparison with the commemorative sacrifice celebrated by Christ's own appointment, in his mystical Israel? If, after all, it should be asked, Who are the offerers of this sacrifice, or where is their reference to a special priesthood? I conceive, an answer is afforded in those few words of the 16th verse, "The cup of blessing which we bless, the bread which we break." The blessing of the cup, and the breaking of the bread, here spoken of, are clearly solemn acts, expressly performed by the great Institutor himself, in the first instance, and



ever after to be repeated in each celebration, by him who officiates in the Institutor's place. When, therefore, the Apostle said, "We bless, we break," he must necessarily have meant himself, and the other "stewards of the mysteries of God." What, then, on the whole, are these appointed "stewards," but priests of the new dispensation, as the sons of Aaron were priests of the old dispensation; differing only from the latter in greater nobleness of service, and the more exalted dignity derived from that Head to whom they are subordinate?

I have confined myself to the slightest touching of this last point. It would require much elucidation to do it justice; but it has been my object to say only what was necessary, and to adhere closely to the sacred text. I cannot, however, refrain from adding one or two brief remarks: Is it not curious, that in exact proportion as the notion of strict Catholicity has been dropped, the sacrificial idea of the Lord's supper has been also abandoned? On the contrary, where Catholicity has been carried to an extreme, a like excess has been observable, both in the construction and celebration of this chief Christian ordinance. Bishop Hoadley's view of the Lord's supper exemplifies one extreme; the Roman Catholic doctrine realises the other. A temperament has been aimed at by Church-of-England divines, which would extract what is Catholic from what is Roman. My mind and heart accord with the idea; but, I conceive, Protestant prejudice must be abated, before there can be a perfect developement of this invaluable conception.

In one respect, however, at least, the Anglican Church has peculiarly substantiated the analogical Judaism of the Lord's supper : I mean, in its opening the gate of its sanctuary to all voluntary worshippers. The Jewish altar was approached, without any disciplinarian distinction, by the ten thousands of Israel. There could be no exclusion of any of the seed of Jacob from the offerings of the Lord. Thus, provision was made for the most diffusive influence : for excitement, wherever there was capability ; for associations congenial to human nature, commensurate to the entire nation, and so radicated in hereditary habits, as to be liable to no casual dissolution. The method of the Church of England respecting the sacrament of the Eucharist, probably approaches nearer that ancient freedom of admission than any thing yet practised : and it is for enlightened candour to judge, whether a proportionate measure of the same effect has not followed. Both in the Roman Catholic Church and in Dissenting Sects, the eucharistic rite is paled in, and human beings are the door-keepers ; to whom satisfaction must be given in order to participation. The consequence seems to have been, that in both cases there is either seriousness in religion, or no religion at all ; on the contrary, in the Church of England there is sincere respect for religion, and a disposition to express that respect, where religious sentiment has scarcely yet been felt. This is favourable to two results : the individual thus impressed, is likely to grow more serious as he advances in life ; and each rising generation is more sure to have religion, in some degree, brought

before it, than if respect for religion were confined to the comparative few who make it an actual rule of conduct. The crowds which throng our altars at the festivals, have ever appeared to me a pledge of religion holding its place in society : and, in witnessing this wide-spread profession, communicated from parents to children, I could not but think that I saw before me one great end of the institution ; as thus, by means of an external act, a solemn recognition of religion was within the power of numbers who could not have been impressed by a merely intellectual exhibition, and who, therefore, would have necessarily become wholly irreligious. Among the Roman Catholics, also, a regard for religion is kept up, by the same means, among the lower classes ; inasmuch as they still submit to the attendant discipline : while the higher classes, especially the male part of them, not liking to confess, are, I apprehend, more and more negligent of all religion. But among Dissenters, this last-mentioned evil appears absolutely inevitable ; as many, not only moral, but serious persons, never receive the sacrament : my authority is Doddridge : you may turn to the passage in the first head of his eighth sermon to young persons. It will follow, I think, on the whole, that in this great instance, Dissenters have nothing whatever of analogical Judaism ; but that it exists both in the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church ; only in different ways, and, as it were, for different providential purposes : a provision for the most enlightened classes being as clearly made in the Church of England, as a provision for the



unenlightened classes appears to be retained in the Church of Rome.

Perhaps, what has been just said of Dissenters would not, in all respects, apply to those species of the same genus which have assumed an established form (as in Scotland, Holland, &c.); and yet, I suspect, even in such instances, there would be no room for comparison with the two Episcopal Churches, in respect of national and hereditary influence. General belief, especially among the higher classes, would too probably be found vague, frigid, and unsettled; and strong sentiment might scarcely any where be discovered, except in conjunction with either mystical flightiness, or dogmatic rigidity. In truth, I apprehend that in all the unepiscopal religions, whether Lutheran or Calvinist, there is a radical want of provision for those feelings of human nature which are at once the most powerful and the most kindly. They honestly, but unwisely, viewed religion in the abstract; and they conceived (especially the Calvinists), that the more detached it was from all merely human likings and habitudes, the more it approached its perfection. Human nature, if at all taken into the account, was regarded as a thing to be resisted and subjugated, not attracted or engaged. Perhaps, in some instances, these first principles of continental reformation may, by the unconquerable instincts of that nature which they sought to trample on, have been softened or counteracted. But as there has been to the present day, no substantial correction of the primary errors, so it may be apprehended, that the results still con-

tinue to be, on the whole, such as might be looked for from so unnatural an arrangement.

I own, therefore, it is only on those Churches which manifest Christian Judaism, that I depend for the continuity of Christian truth and piety. The reformed communities on the Continent were, no doubt, providential institutions, and have served the purpose for which they were designed; but I humbly conceive that purpose to have been of a corrective, rather than a continuative kind. Human nature is substantially at this day in Europe what it was formerly in Judea; and whatever was necessary to make religion diffusive and hereditary in the Jewish nation, must, in substance, be indispensable to the same effects still.

Hence, then, on the whole, the necessity of an analogical Judaism in the Christian Church; and by equally just consequence, the strict connexion between the co-incorporation of the Gentiles with the Jews, and their ultimate co-participancy; in other words, the absolute identity between the *Μυστήριον* in the first chapter, and the *Μυστήριον* in the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians.

Before I say any thing of the *Ἀνακέφαλαίωσις*, I cannot help briefly adverting to the peculiar aspect, with respect to the great progressive scheme presented by the British Isles. It is, in the first place, remarkable, that within our islands all the varieties of occidental Christianity exist; each, perhaps without exception, in greater strength and integrity than any where else in the world. No where else, even in Dr. Milner's judgment, is the Roman

Catholic Church more unimpaired ; no where else is there a like claim to a reformed episcopacy ; no where else is Protestantism, strictly so called, more substantiated ; and no where else is Dissenterism so active, or, possibly, so successful.

To an unphilosophical observer, this variety may make the British Isles appear as an incalculable moral chaos, where parties must go on to jar, and where domestic peace must be regarded as at an immeasurable distance. To me, on the contrary, this apparently fortuitous miscellany bears every mark of profound and exquisite order ; particularly, it presents to my understanding as regular a scale of religious gradations as could have proceeded from the most direct intention :—the Roman Catholic Religion, the Reformed Episcopal Religion, the Presbyterian Communion, and the anomalous mass of Dissenters : these four species, again, seem to require a still further division into two genera—the Episcopal and Unepiscopal ; each of which is respectively made up of an intense and a temperate species. When the four are viewed in their graduated arrangement, the two temperate descriptions (the Church of England and the Church of Scotland), as it were, meet in the middle ; while the two intense species (the Roman Catholics and the Dissenters) occupy the extremities. If one may venture to infer results from past and present appearances, I would say, that in the Episcopal genus, the temperate species is sustained by the intense ; and, in the Unepiscopal genus, the intense species is sustained by the temperate. It seems to me, that our



reformed Episcopal system could hardly, to this day, have retained its integrity of character, if an adequate portion of the unreformed Episcopacy had not been reserved, for the purpose of giving countenance and tone to the milder modification. And, again, the English Dissenting interest might possibly have been too weak for its providential ends, if a kindred establishment had not existed in the empire : what favours this supposition is, that the selfsame movement gave being to toleration of Dissenters in England, and to a Presbyterian Establishment in Scotland.

But, I conceive, at this day we may reckon upon other consequences of a more momentous kind. It is remarkable, that a somewhat similar activity is manifested in both the extremes : the Dissenters never were more on the alert to strengthen their interest in England ; while the Roman Catholic demagogues in Ireland are assuming a bolder tone than has been heard from that quarter, at least since the Revolution. An additionally curious circumstance is, that the Roman Catholic declaimers adopt Dissenting principles ; affect to despise any concession not made upon the ground of general religious liberty ; and, as if from pure love of this new article of their creed, they make impassioned claims for those who have absolutely nothing to receive ! This is literally the case with our Protestant Dissenters, who, for more than thirty years, have enjoyed complete political equality.

What may be the immediate results of these movements, in either country, it might be pre-

sumptuous to pronounce. For my own part, I am much more apprehensive, in this respect, about England than about Ireland; except infatuated counsels should realise to the Roman Catholic demagogues their obvious hope of attaining revolutionary power, by continuing to leave that vast body without the lines, and, of course, beyond the efficiency of the constitution. But, as to remote consequences, I anticipate good only: whatever present success may seem to attend the efforts of the English Dissenters, I persuade myself, the final effect will be a more irresistible exposure of the radical faultiness of the system; and the more energetic the sentiments, and high-toned the language of the Irish Roman Catholics may be, in their pursuit of civil and political equality, the less likely will they be, when on the same level with us in matters civil, to yield implicit obedience in matters ecclesiastical. The independent feeling acquired in their political pursuit will take vent wherever an opening is given; and, when the bone of contention between them and us is removed, their spiritual governors will be the next, and, if things be placed on a proper footing, the only remaining object of their pugnaciousness.

The activity thus set in motion will necessarily lead to changes; and every change in the Roman Catholic body will be in our favour, inasmuch as they cannot recede further from us on their own line; and, therefore, if they move at all, they must approximate to us. In the meantime, a deeper acquaintance with the defects and dangers of Dissenterism, may have disposed us to look with

greater candour towards their religious system ; and, on such an examination, we may, perhaps, see that, in divesting ourselves of things really rejectionable, we sometimes parted with more interior principles, of which the matters rejected were, no doubt, very uncouth exhibitors, but whose substance ought to have been separated, like a nutritious and palatable kernel from an unsightly shell. I will only add, that if matters between the two Churches were once brought thus far, it strikes me that a more efficient development of genuine Catholicity might be hoped for than has yet been realised in the Christian world. Analogical Judaism would, in that case, be likely to attain its fullest completion and most entire efficacy.

Let me observe, however, that, in the prospect with which I thus venture to please myself, I do not suppose the least return to any thing childish or superstitious; I merely think that in the Roman Catholic Church, under symbols and ceremonies on various accounts exceptionable, the things signified may not seldom be deeply true and sublimely interesting. In every such instance, therefore, my wish would be, that the integument should be so thrown off as to retain, unimpaired, the invaluable interior; so that, on the whole, nothing should remain that could revolt reason, offend good taste, or jar with evangelical consistency; and nothing be wanting that could serve to make religion engaging to our whole nature, diffusive through the whole of life, individual and collective, and identical in integrity and efficacy through



successive generations. What I thus briefly express, needs large elucidation; but I must commit it to your candour, and to the light which may have been afforded by statements on other occasions.

I now proceed to give you a few thoughts on the ἀνακεφαλαιώσεις τῶν πάντων, though I feel deeply how inadequate I am to speak on this most mysterious subject; as well as what an indistinct idea must be conveyed by the few words to which I must confine myself. It strikes me, that in fixing the sense of the Apostle's words, ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι τὰ πάντα ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ, τά τε ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς καὶ τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, we must keep in view what he tells us afterwards, several times, in this Epistle: that Christ is κεφαλὴ ὑπὲρ πάντα τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ (i. 22.) λίθος ἀκρογωναῖος (ii. 20); the head into which we are to grow in all things (iv. 15); and, once more, κεφαλὴ τῆς ἐκκλησίας καὶ σωτὴρ τοῦ σώματος. In the simplest possible meaning, then, of the term ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι, I conceive, it must imply such a reducing and subordinating of all the movements of this world, both moral and providential, to the rule and influence of the Messiah, as will put him in perfect possession, through his own adorable acquirement, of this part of his everlasting birth-right; and, at the same time, will realise to the intelligent universe, the gloriously benignant purpose for which this portion of creation was called out of nothing, and led, by infinite wisdom, through such a series of mysterious vicissitudes.

In no lower view than this can I apprehend the concurrent import of the above passages. An

import, I conceive, almost sufficiently plain in any one of them ; but, in their united connexion, absolutely irresistible. The first passage merely contains the proposition ; the second begins to explain it by the image of a rising structure, which, advancing by successive ranges on a plan the most harmonious, is at length to be completed by the laying on of a majestic top-stone, and then to constitute a glorious temple, devoted to the honour and filled with the presence of its infinitely powerful, wise, and gracious Author.

In thus understanding the passage, I am guided by that which it obviously refers to in the 118th Psalm ; and which claims our attention the more, as our Lord has so distinctly and emphatically applied it to himself ; clearly referring it both to his first rejection and final glorification. The entire Psalm seems to be a triumphant thanksgiving of the Church, in the first transports which shall be felt at the period of ultimate deliverance. The late overwhelming and almost hopeless circumstances of the Church, are at once feelingly and joyfully adverted to ; and exactly such a contrast formed, as would be most natural at the moment of deliverance. But it is, also, an hour of solemn celebration : a temple is approached, and this is the processional song. The fabric arrived at, itself becomes the subject ; and the circumstance dwelt upon is, that a stone once rejected by the builders, now occupies the highest place in the structure, and constitutes its chief beauty and glory. It is, also, to be remarked, that it is a *corner stone*, indicating (as I observed in speaking on the former

subject) two fronts; that is, the Jewish front, and the Christian front. The former being, at the period referred to, perfectly restored to its place in the mystical economy. This great event, however, is only hinted at; it is the once rejected stone now become the head of the corner, which occupies attention and excites wonder and praise. This, say they, "is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes."

This impressive passage, I conceive, can be understood only in one way. That, at the destined season, the whole order of things shall come perfectly under the influence and rule of the Messiah; that the visible Church, extended to its utmost magnitude and completely harmonised in all its members and in all its properties—its beauty equal to its grandeur, and every part contributing its proportion to the glory of the whole,—shall then, for the first time, appear worthy of its adorable Constructor and Owner. As every step in the mysterious progress of the work will be seen to have pointed toward the Messiah's ultimate exaltation, so it will be yet more evident, that the accomplishment of that glorious object gives dignity and excellence to the whole. As it is said in Zechariah, "He shall bring forth the head stone thereof with shoutings. Grace, grace, unto it." In plain terms, the mystical kingdom of righteousness and peace, to which all movements, human or angelic, from the moment of creation, have been preparatory,—and, through overruling omniscience, each more or less conducive;—shall come into perfect exercise, so as to reflect the highest glory and honour on



Him, whose love commenced, whose wisdom conducted, and whose ascendant and all-pervading influence consummates, the unparalleled undertaking.

I am obliged to go thus far in my explanation, in order to do justice to the Apostle's figure. A stone forming the head of the corner, is self-evidently not laid on until the structure be in other respects completed; it then knits and perfects the whole: a mutual harmony, existing prospectively from the beginning, being now accomplished, between the entire work and this its chief ornament. Such an accomplishment then, especially when connected with the previous rejection stated in the Psalmist's prophecy, is most clearly an ἀνακεφαλαίωσις; that is, as our translators not unfitly render it, "a gathering together of all things into one." And when this is represented under the image of a building, it evidently implies not a transient concluding display (which Boyle's idea would seem only to amount to), but the perfected establishment, of a new and permanent order of things: the settled sanctity of which, as well as the lasting glory occurring to its Author and Finisher, is still further indicated by the appellation of a temple.

Another of the passages referred to, demands particular attention: I mean that contained in the first sixteen verses of the 4th chapter. What was represented in the former figure, as the progress of a building, is here elucidated by the growth of a body; but it is such a growth, as is to produce gradual adaptation to the head—we are to grow

up, in all things, into him. Compare this 15th verse of the 4th chapter, with the 21st verse of the 2d chapter; and judge whether there is not the strictest identity of meaning. The point to be arrived at, is luminously stated in the 13th verse—a unity of Πίστις and Ἐπίγνωσις, or, consonantly with the figure, “a perfect man;” having both stature and fulness answering to its head. This is the great object, therefore (in the 15th verse), ἀυξήσωμεν εἰς υἱατὸν τὰ πάντα, ὅς ἐστιν ἡ κεφαλὴ: it clearly follows, that the completion of the design will be ἀνακεφαλαιώσις τῶν πάντων ἐν αὐτῷ.

I have had occasion before to remark upon this passage, and therefore need not repeat what has been said already (I refer you particularly to the 264th page); nor need I observe to you that, while the latter of the two figures strictly agrees with the former in substantial significancy, it conveys new and beautiful ideas respecting the means of progress. A building is advanced by extrinsic agency; but a body αὐξησιν ποιεῖται εἰς οἰκοδομήν ἑαυτοῦ. In a building, each range merely supports those that are successively superinduced; but a body makes progress διὰ πάσης ἀφ᾽ ἧς τῆς ἐπιχορηγίας; and, consequently, the effect is produced κατ’ ἐνέργειαν ἐν μέτρῳ ἑνὸς ἐκάστου μέρους. Here, therefore, the mystical body of Christ is represented as a divinely constructed automaton, accomplishing its own perfection by its own concurrent and successive movements. Such a process, in proportion to its steadiness and efficiency, does honour to the artist; and, accordingly, one design, at least, is declared to be ἵνα γνωρισθῇ ταῖς ἀρχαῖς καὶ ταῖς ἐξουσιαῖς ἐν τοῖς

ἐπουρανόις διὰ τῆς ἐκκλησίας ἡ πολυποίκιλος σοφία τοῦ Θεοῦ. Of such a scheme, the object must of course be proportionate to the apparatus. In the human body, growth terminates in a lasting result : it is when the man is full grown, that he enters on the entire discharge of his functions ; we are, therefore, led by the figure, to anticipate an analogous consummation of the great mystical body, and to conclude that the ἀνακεφαλαιώσεις τῶν πάντων will imply, not a mere elucidation of past movements, however satisfactory or glorious ; but the opening of a new scene, in which every benignant idea, that had place in the mind of the Creator, when the morning stars sung together, “ and all the sons of God shouted for joy,” will be completely and lastingly realised ; and the creation so long made subject to vanity, will be amply compensated by becoming, through a long period of undisturbed and unalloyed felicity, the spotless mirror of Divine beneficence.

I must direct your notice to one passage more : so absorbed in this sublime prospect is St. Paul, throughout this whole Epistle, that, even after entering on other topics, not connected with the former argument, except as deriving from it a deeper obligation, and a purer and more exalted principle, he unconsciously rises from a moral exhortation, again to delight himself with all the glories which he had been contemplating. A striking instance of this occurs in his address to husbands, respecting the treatment due to their wives ; you will find it, indeed, in both addresses—to wives and to husbands, but chiefly in the latter.



The Apostle here not only alludes to the subject which he had been discussing, but he takes occasion, from the love of a virtuous husband to his wife, to bring the ἀνακεφαλαιώσεις once more before us. "He gave himself," we are told, "for the Church, not only that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word," but with this ulterior design; "that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." It is clear that these last words allude to a state of the Church not yet realised: a state, in short, of matured excellence and complete investiture of every purposed privilege. It follows, that a fulfilment of this Divine intention is still to be accomplished; and the sole question is, here or hereafter? I hesitate not to answer, here; not only because the general language of the Epistle points unitedly to this conclusion, but also because in the first notification of God's mysterious purpose, in the 10th verse of the 1st chapter, it is expressly said, that the Ἀνακεφαλαιώσεις is to embrace all things, as well ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς as ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς, which could not be, if there were not an accomplishment on earth as well as a triumph in heaven.

I wish, however, to say a little more on this matter, as I conceive the view which I am pointing to can be obscured solely by the supposition, that the predicted prosperity of the Church is to be accomplished not here, but in heaven. Probably Boyle entertained this idea, otherwise he would have given adequate extension to the last scene

of what he calls, "this whole amazing opera." Much certainly depends on the settling of this point; for that bright effulgence in which the whole convergiment of prophecy terminates, must be realised somewhere; and if on earth, we cannot entertain too exalted an expectation of the future circumstances of the Christian Church, nor, consequently, give too sublime a construction to the studied significancy of those passages in the Epistle to the Ephesians, which we are now considering.

It is worth our attention, that if we look for a fulfilment of prophecy respecting the Church on this earth, we shall be able to form some distinct idea of the state of things which we hope for. In that case, the blessings to be enjoyed will differ in degree only, and not in kind, from those which have already been experienced. We know the nature of Christian righteousness, and can easily conceive the happiness which its advancement and diffusion would confer on individuals, families, and communities. We already are, in some measure, taught what it is to worship God in spirit and in truth, and can therefore picture to ourselves the grandeur and beauty of external celebrations, animated and exalted by an internal yet sympathetic soul of pure and fervent devotion. In a word, when we suppose what we now witness of Christian goodness and happiness to be the true, though imperfect, and still too rare specimen of that maturity and universality of goodness and happiness which we are encouraged to anticipate, then we may study the Scripture prophecies with rational satisfaction; because, in proportion as we ourselves are ac-

quainted with true piety, we have a key to the prophetic language, and are enabled so to trace its connexion, and apprehend its import, as to derive from it the highest delight, and the most substantial edification. On the other hand, if we consider heaven as the subject dwelt upon in the prophetic page, we must limit our contemplation to mere indistinct generalities. The accumulated variety of representation, with all its richness of imagery and glow of colour, stand us in no stead; we are not one bit wiser or better informed than if this elaborate apparatus had not existed. Knowing nothing of heaven, except as it implies consummate enjoyment of God, and happiest intercourse with beatified intelligences, we can refer nothing which we read to its corresponding object. The more the descriptions are diversified, the more we are bewildered; and we close the prophetic volume in perfect despair of ever extracting from this seeming treasury of divine light, one single ray of intelligible instruction.

But further, if there be ground for concluding that the grand completion of prophecy will take place upon earth, we gain a clue by which we may hope to make our way through many intricacies of Providence; probably, not otherwise to be disentangled. If all the great results of present movements are to be referred to the eternal state, it would seem that the influence of the movements can be only indirect and remote. The difference between all circumstances here and hereafter must be conceived such as to leave no room for supposing more than a general tendency of exercise,



under trials, to increase capacity ; and an equitable fitness that suffering should be compensated. But even this supposition would only explain individual cases ; while, obviously, the most momentous phenomena of Providence are those which affect communities. For these latter, therefore, the events of a future world furnish no elucidation. The scene, the instruments, and the subjects, are alike terrestrial ; nor can we imagine results of those movements, stretching beyond that state of things which afforded the occasion and elements of such transactions. But, if we are authorised to expect a completion of prophecy upon earth—if the promise of prosperity belong to the Church which now exists, then the darkness which seemed to shroud all the greater movements of Providence, gives way to an increasing light, which grows upon us in proportion as we advert to the instances in which apparent evil has already been productive of good. If the body of human society is to be benefited and blessed collectively, as well as its members individually, then we must conceive a collective process of melioration analogous to that by which individual minds are instructed and improved : and we shall as naturally look for that collective process in the greater movements of Providence, which have communities and empires for their subject, as we connect the idea of beneficial personal discipline with the unseen but sure adjustment of individual circumstances.

Besides, in the prospect of general melioration here, we seem, to ourselves, to see the providential management of the Christian Church in a light with which no other view of things could furnish

us. Were the maturity of Christ's mystical kingdom wholly deferred to the eternal state, we could not conceive a necessity for any other instrumentality than that which was conducive to individual correction and improvement. The accomplishment of mere personal good — I mean the conversion of the wicked or careless, and the growth of piety and virtue in those already converted,—would be the sole conceivable ends to which ecclesiastical institutions could be rationally adapted. The simple question between rival bodies of religionists would then, of course, be, which makes the greatest number of moral converts, and can produce the largest proportion of pious members? But, were such the standard, what could be said in behalf of such a national Church Establishment as ours? I cannot help thinking that, by this rule of judging, the most obscure pious sect which has existed since the eighth century (when those bodies first became conspicuous), would carry away the palm from the Church of England, or any similar Church. You know it is accordingly asked, what have your Church dignities, and pompous formalities, and theatrical celebrations, to do with the salvation of souls? and, in truth, were the salvation of John, Thomas, or Mary, the sole object—that is, were nothing more in view than the proceeding as hitherto, until an elect number should be completed, I could imagine no satisfactory answer to such a question. But, no sooner do we admit the prospect of collective renovation, than we feel the expediency of other means beside those adapted to mere individual good: we feel it for this reason especially, because, in proportion as individual good

becomes an exclusive object, a spirit of seclusion from the world has been ever, as it were, the instinctive concomitant ; and I doubt not, it would be found that, in every such case, a relaxation of this avoidance has been the prognostic of vapidity and degeneracy. That agency, therefore, cannot be adequate to the moral regeneration of society at large, which must keep religiously aloof from society, in order to its own preservation. But, were even this obstacle removed, what could we reckon upon in society at large, from any imaginable extension of such influences as have hitherto been most successful in effecting individual conversions ? The uncertainty of their occurrence, the mixed character which they manifest, the aberrations to which they are liable, the disproportionateness of their utmost conceivable efficacy, afford decisive evidence of their insufficiency for establishing the universal and permanent reign of righteousness. According to the most candid estimate, they would seem to be providential means of invigorating the mystical leaven, much rather than of diffusing it through the three measures of meal.

The instrumentality adequate to work effectually on society must be proportioned to its subject, in extensiveness, durability, natural attractiveness, and steadiness of operation. We look in vain for these properties in any of the movements of epidemic piety which have occurred hitherto ; nor, I conceive, do we discover them, at this day, any where, except in Episcopal establishments : we do not find any thing of the kind in the best of the one ; we find much in the worst of the other. In the Church of Rome, in spite of accumulated



errors, speculative and practical, true faith and holy feeling have been preserved from generation to generation. In no sect, on the contrary, that we know, has a century elapsed, without a declension either in faith or in feeling, or in both. I am persuaded there is something in nature which precludes the attainment of present sensible effect, and deep lasting result, by precisely the same means. If, therefore, both present effect and lasting result are needed in the Divine economy, we would expect to find correspondent provision; and when we actually find such a twofold provision, we are no longer in doubt of its necessity, when we take cognisance of an equally twofold purpose. Thus, the admission of an ultimate reign of righteousness on earth, explains providential phenomena, otherwise not to be accounted for; and furnishes with a master-key to what, I presume, are most eminently to be called "the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven."

In this view, I conceive that a just apprehension of the purposed *Ἀνακεφαλαιώσις* is indispensable to our study of God's providential operations, whether in the world or in the Church. And as no species of knowledge (except the experimental knowledge of Divine grace) either implies such true wisdom, or affords such solid consolation, as a clear insight into the movements of Providence, it is of the highest importance that the question should be settled—Is righteousness yet to triumph in this present world; or is this glorious event wholly reserved for eternity?

SECOND LETTER TO JOHN S. HARFORD, ESQ. ON  
THE FATHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH,  
AND ON CATHOLIC TRADITION.

MY DEAR MR. HARFORD,

I DO assure you, neglect has had no share in delaying the acknowledgment of your last acceptable letter: within these few days only, could I sit down with a mind sufficiently free, or even with time enough at my disposal, to say any thing worth your notice on any of the points you bring before me. Let me, in the first place, most sincerely thank Mrs. H. and yourself for your kind wish to see me in England. Various hinderances concur to prevent my availing myself this year of your friendly invitation. Should Divine Providence permit such a movement next year, you cannot fail to see me, as your neighbourhood is the point to which I am uniformly drawn: and were it otherwise, I could not but sensibly feel the new attraction which you present me.

I have not been inattentive to your query respecting the *Μυστήριον*, but after having said a good deal, unusual indisposition prevented the completion of my design. When I can, I will add what remains to be said, and transmit it to you. I thank God I have been able to write a little during

the last three or four months : but several matters pressed upon me, which made postponement of other desirable things indispensable.

Possibly you did not read Edwards with the same predisposition to make allowance that I felt : considering him as the most systematic Calvinist of his time, and one of the most settled Dissenters, I was far more surprised at his enlarged and exalted views, than revolted by the intermixture of dogmatism that every now and then occurred. Perhaps, too, in some of those instances which appear to you over-confident, a coincidence with ideas of mine may have made me partial, instead of sceptical. On the whole, I consider it one of the most interesting works which latter ages have produced ; but yet, rather as opening a view, than as placing it satisfactorily before us : it has made, I conceive, a very noble beginning, in a course of investigation, than which none other can be more interesting on this side heaven.

I quite agree in your comparative estimate of Smith and Worthington ; and I am gratified by what you say of Nicole. I am sure your praise of him is founded, and I do not question the justness of your candidly qualified exception to his austerity. I own, however, I wish earnestly for some new class of writers who would combine the excellences, and repel the errors, of those who have gone before. I particularly regret that, at this day of increased activity and extended inquiry, one cannot point out a single book which directly and distinctly, simply and comprehensively, introduces an inquirer to the sacred science of Christianity.



But, again, I repress this feeling. The fact is, as I say :—but it ought to be so, or it would not be so :—and infallibly, as soon as the world shall be capable of using, with advantage, such an aid as I am imagining, it will not be suffered to remain wanting. In the mean time, much as I value the Fathers of the Church, I cannot promise you a supply in any of them for the deficiency I have been remarking on ; yet acquaintance with them, on their own terms, will be found no common privilege. Their excellence does not consist in a continuous evolution of instructive matter ; and, therefore, I cannot venture to name treatises. What they are valuable for is (in my mind) the comprehensiveness of their principles, and the cordiality with which they express them. Most of the sincerest modern teachers write and speak as if they had been drilled by habit into their power of religiously conceiving and enouncing. The Fathers, on the contrary, speak and write in the simplicity of nature, as if that on which they give their thoughts formed the element of their soul ; and, accordingly, they sometimes utter in a sentence or two what indemnifies richly for pages of commonplace ;—which, however, will scarcely be found, and least of all, in Chrysostom and Augustin. I feel an inclination to give a specimen of this, from St. Chrysostom's first Homily on St. Matthew (the whole of which, however, is interesting). He is speaking of the first diffusion of Christianity ; in which, he says, there was a “ *θεία δύναμις πάντα ἐπιουσα καὶ καταρθουσα παρὰ πᾶσιν, ἑπεὶ εἰ μὴ τοῦτο ἦν* (he proceeds), *πῶς ὁ τελάνης, καὶ ὁ ἀλιεύς, καὶ ὁ ἀγρᾶμματος τοιαυτὰ ἐφιλοσόφει ; ἃ γὰρ*

οὐδὲ ὄναρ οἱ ἔξωθεν φαντασθῆναι ἡδυήθησάν ποτε, ταῦτα οὗτοι μετὰ πολλῆς τῆς πληροφορίας καὶ ἀπαγγέλλουσι καὶ πείθουσι, καὶ οὐχὶ ζῶντες μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τελευτήσαντες. Οὐδὲ δυὸ καὶ εἴκοσιν ἀνθρώπους, οὐδὲ ἑκατὸν καὶ χιλίους καὶ μυρίους, ἀλλὰ πόλεις, καὶ ἔθνη, καὶ δήμους, καὶ γῆν, καὶ θαλάσσαν, καὶ Ἑλλάδα, καὶ Βαρβάρων, καὶ τὴν οἰκουμένην, καὶ τὴν ἀοίκητον, καὶ περὶ πραγμάτων σφόδρα τὴν ἡμετέραν ὑπερβαινόντων φύσιν· τὴν γὰρ γῆν ἀφέντες, πάντα περὶ τῶν ἐν οὐρανοῖς διαλέγονται, ἑτέραν ἡμῶν ξαὴν εἰσάγοντες, καὶ βίον ἄλλον, καὶ πλουτον, καὶ πενιάν, καὶ ἐλευθερίαν, καὶ δουλείαν, καὶ ζωὴν, καὶ θάνατον, καὶ κόσμον, καὶ πολιτείαν, πάντα ἐξηλλαγμένα. I think you will feel the simple yet powerful gush of heart that is in all this; but mark the comprehensiveness of the concluding words, from τὴν γὰρ γῆν to the end; and how, with a few of the readiest and most rapid touches, he sketches the very substance of vital Christianity.

I doubt whether St. Chrysostom's finest passages are not to be found in his expository Discourses, especially on St. Matthew and the Epistle to the Hebrews. No man had better studied St. Paul's character; therefore, wherever St. Paul himself comes forward in his Epistles, Chrysostom is the fittest of all men to hold the light by which to view him. In short, wherever the heart is to be poured forth in "thoughts that breathe, and words that burn," Chrysostom is without parallel.

On the other hand, is order, method, systematic statement, the object? It is not Chrysostom; it is not any Greek Father (within my acquaintance), that I could recommend: they are all collectors of gold, silver, and costly stones, rather than even superstructural architects; and of laying founda-

tions they know still less. This is the province of the Latin Fathers; and, above all, of St. Augustin. He seems to me to have reduced the evangelic doctrine to a truer system than it ever obtained before or after (I don't mean, as you will believe, that all he says is to be taken for granted): In the first instance (after his confession), I would direct your attention to his "*De Moribus Ecclesiæ*," and his "*De Verâ Religione*." I wish he had never given up certain noble sentiments in the former of these; then he would not have been the arch-misinterpreter of St. Paul's 7th to the Romans. But Divine Providence saw what was best to be permitted: and, take him all in all, Augustin was the wisest master-builder, after St. Paul, that the Christian Church has yet been blessed with: I do not think even Milner overvalues him, in deeming him the instrument of an almost pentecostal re-invigoration.

But, to possess the entire practical scheme, we must, I think, unite Chrysostom with Augustin; we must add the heights of the former to the depths of the latter. No one, after the Apostles, excelled Augustin in teaching what constitutes the essence of Divine life. But to know the happiness to which its possessor should aspire, Chrysostom, in my mind, is the fitter guide. I have remarked on this, in what I wrote respecting Jeremy Taylor, for the "*Eclectic Review*," 1810.

I advise you to look out for Macarius; considering his time, country, circumstances, &c., he is a wonderful spiritualist; no Greek Father is so (strictly speaking) experimental. Athanasius and



Gregory Nazianzen I know little of: St. Basil is neither so brilliant as Chrysostom, nor so systematically interior as Macarius; but he is a strong witness for efficient Christianity. He possessed its power in his heart, and from the abundance of his heart his mouth spoke.

This is, in my mind, the main excellence of the Fathers;—the evidence which they give to the efficacious grace of the Gospel, and (speaking from my own feeling, I must add) their not embarrassing this “one thing needful” with any dogmatic accompaniments.—I ask myself, if the Fathers were wanting, how could we hope definitively to establish the experimental and efficient construction of the New Testament against the increasing active phalanx of learned and respectable anti-fanatics? And again, how could I entertain the thought of resisting (as I dare to do) the dogmatism of modern evangelics, while I contend for so much of their internal feeling? I think I should be hopeless on both grounds, if I had not the series of ancient luminaries to look up through; and if, in so looking, I were not satisfied that they are, unitedly, as experimental, and, at the same time, as undogmatic as myself. Yes! in contemplating this reality, a sensation may be felt, not wholly unlike that of the prophet’s servant, when (on the prayer of his master) he saw the hill surrounded by a heavenly guard, and enjoyed the assurance, that they which were for his master, were more and greater than those which were against him!

But is not this to lay undue stress on human authority? No; because it is not authority which

we here resort to: it would be authority if we shaped our opinions by theirs; but facts are what we look for; the fruits produced by their principles in temper and conduct; the frame of their life, the flow of their hearts; the tenor and character of their prevalent affections. To attend to these, is to receive evidence, not to bend to authority; and if such evidence be clear, continuous, and concurrent, evincing indubitable integrity in each, and harmonious agreement in all (agreement, I mean, in such radical qualities as human beings never could give to themselves, by their own will or choice), a satisfaction the most solid and conclusive is obtained, respecting both what Christianity is, what it effects, and what it does and does not contain. In thus examining the successive witnesses of evangelic grace, we enter, as it were, into the Divine laboratory, where we find God's work both confirming and elucidating his word. What is uniformly found in this series of experiments, cannot be illusive; what is rarely found, cannot be essential; what is not found through fourteen successive centuries, can have but a weak title to after reception. This, I humbly conceive, is so far from undue yielding to authority, that it is rather an application of Lord Bacon's principles of philosophising, to the investigation of evangelical truth; it is, in fact, learning theology by induction. Amid the varying winds of doctrine (the tempestuous din of dissonant interpretations), some ground on which to anchor, is infinitely desirable; and what ground can be comparable to this, — *quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus?*

How can I so safely quote Scripture, as by the master-key which I receive from this *consensus omnium*?

But, says Chillingworth, and Dailè, and Whitby, and their followers, “in pursuing this inquiry, we obtain no satisfaction; inasmuch as we find Father against Father, and Council against Council, until, at length, the searcher after truth is bewildered in endless mazes of confusion.”

To me it appears that these men were disappointed, because they set out in error: they looked for that which it was unreasonable to expect,—unity in unessential opinions. They had little idea, it should seem, of the internal energies of Christianity: they regarded religion as a scheme of notional principles, to be believed; and of practical rules, to be obeyed. And seeking guidance in these instances, it was impossible they should succeed; for, in these respects, it clearly appears that human fallibility was greatly left to itself; probably, because change and variety here were as necessary to the general design, as stability and uniformity in matters vital. These could not suffer alteration without injury to the divinely destined purpose. In these, therefore, and in all matters essentially connected with these, we are warranted to suppose infallible superintendence—“Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world;” that is, self-evidently, for all vital purposes. Here, therefore, let us seek; and, I conceive, we shall not fail to find: we shall find a harmony of feelings, and a harmony of radical principles sustaining those feelings. Thus shall



we be confirmed, in what many who think themselves wise, vilify as fanatical. And, judging by myself, I add, thus may we be disencumbered of much which modern dogmatists deem essentially evangelical.

But I do not confine the satisfaction derived from this source to matters strictly of a vital nature: I conceive, by beginning at the right end, we shall obtain light respecting the general movements of Providence, not otherwise to be acquired. Viewed in the light of mere human reason, the Christian Church will appear a scene of unceasing tumult and inexplicable confusion. Look at it from a higher point of view, *i. e.*, contemplate it through the medium of experimental, undogmatical piety. Provision for this primary object—its necessary sustenance through dark ages, and its destined diffusion through the mass of society (“like the leaven hid in the three measures of meal”), with the obvious necessity of waiting for a result thus gradually to be accomplished, will, probably, explain many mysterious permissions, as well as actual arrangements, which nothing else would account for. And perhaps, too, we may, in this way, be best enabled to discriminate, in the mixed mass of religious institutions and observances at present existing in the world, between those which are temporary, and those which are likely to be permanent; those with which human weakness has been permitted, for a time, to assist itself; and those which Divine wisdom itself has adjusted to the unchanging substance of human nature.

I fear, that, in order to be brief, I am very obscure: I simply mean, that, to judge correctly of what has taken place in the Church, we must first ascertain the chief object of its institution. And here, I think, the most illusive error would be, to ascribe that value to doctrinal theories, which essentially (I think exclusively) belongs to substantiated inward effects. The overvaluer of theories will at once condemn every thing which appears hostile to his favourite object. It will avail little, in his view, what feelings are produced, if there be a deviation from, still more an opposition to, what he deems truth. On the other hand, he who is solicitous only for inward energies, for what spiritually animates, purifies, liberates, and exalts the soul, will estimate means by effects, not effects by means. And thus, impartially examining all the various movements of the visible Church, he may see cause to value what many others, really good men, depreciate; and to excuse, where others reprobate.

I make these remarks, because I conceive some such view is requisite, in order to read the Fathers with reasonable pleasure. Tried by any popular standard of to-day, without regard to providential destination, they would scarcely excite interest, and, most certainly, be placed on a low level. Chrysostom might be favoured for his eloquence, and Augustin for his acuteness and strength; but, on the whole, there would be general depreciation. Consider them as links in a chain, as occupying successive trusts in a progressive and, therefore, diversified dispensation;

and who can say, but their apparent weaknesses may have served to fit them more exactly for the time and persons to which they were respectively allotted? While, perhaps, it might still be easier to shew that their higher qualities give decisive evidence of their being as really chosen for their several seasons and functions, as the Apostles were for their authoritative mission.

I recommend you to get, if you have not already, “Dupin’s *Bibliothèque des Pères* ;” a respectable translation is to be had at most old book-shops. By consulting him, you will be directed to such parts of the Fathers as will best meet your liking, or put you in possession of their most valuable matter. Dupin was, if possible, too latitudinous a Roman Catholic : I mean, too latitudinous, to be completely at his ease, when such restraints were imposed on the exercise of opinion.

It might be worth your while to read Chrysostom’s “*Treatise on the Priesthood*.” It was, probably, his first work, and has in it more sportiveness of fancy, than close or concatenated observation ; but it is still highly interesting. I have read it, and should have thought myself compensated by a single passage, in which he shews how superior the vocation of a bishop is to that of a monastic recluse. His remarks would almost seem a paraphrase on our Lord’s account of the Baptist’s dispensation and his own.

Gregory I. will interest you the more, as being the principal author of our prayers. I think your own eye will easily fix upon his more



glowing passages: I suppose there scarcely could be a more pious writer. (See Milner, vol. iii.)

Bernard has more talent, and his piety is not less sincere; but it is less sublime. He strikes me as approaching, more than any of his predecessors, to modern doctrinality; he is invaluable, notwithstanding, as, in the clearest and strongest manner, maintaining and exemplifying the religion of the heart. For supporting this *unum necessarium*, Cyprian, Augustin, Gregory I. and Bernard, form an impregnable chain of posts from the third to the twelfth century. Between Gregory and Bernard comes in our own venerable Bede, and forms a tie between the body of the Fathers and the English Church. I should imagine Milner rates him at his fair value: he is, however, to be looked into, rather than read for edification.

I merely looked into the "Tour to Alet," being at once satisfied that it was a gross misrepresentation. It did not strike me as the work of a Wesleyan; I, on the contrary, seemed to myself to see every where the sentiments and expressions of modern Evangelicism. To me, this was no improvement; as I incomparably prefer what I suppose to have been the natural complexion of the book, to the factitious colouring of the translator. The turn the subject has taken in the "Christian Observer" for May, seems to me to tend little to edification: we are in no danger of re-adopting Roman Catholic weaknesses. To what purpose, then, dwell upon the excessive respect for departed saints and their relics? We may be edified by the piety, without the slightest

danger from the error: all we are concerned to ask, is, Did the error lessen or actually vitiate the piety? If this can be shewn, the blazoning of the error might, perhaps, serve to heighten our satisfaction at having rejected it. If the error did not lessen the piety, then, though we cannot, and ought not, and are infinitely unlikely to, bring our mind to their mind, why should we not bring our heart to their heart? When it is morally impossible we should yield ourselves to their dominion, there can be no reason why we should not traffic with them in that which everlastingly enriches.

I certainly think the translator of the "Tour" has provoked those animadversions. But I see not the use of so elaborate a research; except more pains were taken to draw the line between unquestionable error, and those valuable, but not always obvious, truths which are sometimes found in error's neighbourhood. Is there, for example, no justness in that remark of M. De Sacy, p. 318, that, in relation to the mysteries inconceivable to the human mind, we must "have recourse first to the authority of tradition?" Observe,—I am not defending De Sacy in his length and breadth; very far, indeed, from it: what I ask, is, does the position contain nothing of truth? What is definite religious education but a practical application of this very principle? When children are taught to believe in God the Father, in God the Son, and in God the Holy Ghost, and to address these, first, each severally, then, all unitedly, in the public devotions of the Church; is not this, as far

as in us lies, to place our infant Christians under the guidance of tradition? Do such of us as love this doctrine, feel any regret in the thought, that we, too, in our season of ductility, were formed in the same traditional mould? Or, are we sure that, had there been no transmission by oral instruction, and all had rested on the text alone, independently and disconnectedly resorted to, not only by each successive race, but by each individual of that race (for to this, self-evidently, comes the unqualified wholesale rejection of tradition); are we sure, I say, that any of us would have deduced for ourselves from the naked Scripture, the clear definite belief of any one Christian mystery? If we cannot be sure of this; if our conduct toward the rising generation evinces that we apprehend the direct contrary, then, how can we, consistently, depreciate what we thus, in the case nearest the human heart, primarily and uniformly rely upon?

The writer in the "Christian Observer" would, of course, be deemed a Church-of-England man. How little is he aware that, in maintaining that abstract Protestantism which leaves each individual "to model his faith and conduct simply by his own interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, without any reference to the authority of tradition," he as really diverges from the wise temperament of the Anglican Church upon the one side, as the most strenuous Roman Catholic could diverge from it on the other!

Mosheim, who, standing at a due distance from the English Establishment, was more likely to catch



its real character than those within its pale, has described our Reformation as "that \* corrective of the ancient religion which equally stands aloof from the Roman Catholics, and from the great body of Continental Protestants." I conceive nothing can be more just, generally, than this definition; and in no instance does it more strictly hold good, than in the view of the Church of England respecting Catholic tradition.

The error of the Roman Catholics, according to the writer in the "Christian Observer," is, that, in trial of doctrines, they appeal, not to the oracles of Scripture alone, but also to the sentiments of the "Fathers and the decrees of the Councils." On this point, then, what says the Church of England? Doubtless, as far as the Church of Rome ascribes to Fathers or Councils an authority co-ordinate with Scripture, or in any respect contradictory to what the written word has plainly asserted, the Church of England maintains an opposite belief; and attributes to the sacred text, as far as its import is indisputable, a force with which nothing can come into competition. But, in giving this divine pre-eminence to Holy Scripture, does she exclude either Fathers or Councils from being subordinately authoritative? On the contrary, she has uniformly recognised that tradition, which Fathers and Councils have been the chief instruments in sustaining, as an invaluable auxiliary to the sacred word; both for the elucidation of what might otherwise remain

\* *Illa veteris religionis correctio, quæ Britannos æquæ a Pontificiis atque a reliquis familiis quæ Pontificiis dominationi renuntiarunt sejungit.*

ambiguous, and for the specification of whatever has been only generally intimated.

Where, perhaps, it will be asked, does the Church of England speak the language I ascribe to her? Thirteen times every year in the Athanasian Creed:—"For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every person by himself to be God and Lord, so we are forbidden by the Catholic Religion to say there be three Gods or three Lords." Here are, self-evidently, two authorities—the Christian verity, and the Catholic Religion. The former can mean neither more nor less than the manifest import of the written word. What, then, means the Catholic Religion? Can it be otherwise understood than as the concurrent and continuous voice of tradition? what Vincentius Lirinensis calls the *quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus*.

To the conclusiveness of this evidence it can only be objected, that the Athanasian Creed having been adopted by wholesale, it would scarcely be justifiable to consider every particular passage as a deliberate expression of sentiment from the adopting party. But, inasmuch as the Church of England, in reforming her institutions, claimed the right of exercising an unfettered judgment, it is not conceivable that she should have retained a formulary, to any part of which she felt an objection. Besides, it is a fact that, even in this creed, where she disapproved she altered; in the old formularies, the last sentence in the Athanasian Creed denounced all who do not believe the Catholic Faith, *fideliter atque firmiter*. Our

Reformers, doubtless, from a feeling of liberal charity, rejected the *firmiter* and retained only the *fideliter* ; that is, they excused the weak, and condemned only the obstinate. Does it not follow, that, if the passage I adduce had been similarly objected to, it would have been similarly modified ?

Again, the principle in question was expressly adopted in the fundamental law of our reformed Establishment. I mean in the Act of Supremacy (1 Eliz.) In that statute, power was given to the sovereign to appoint commissioners for censuring and suppressing heresies ; but it is expressly enacted, that those opinions only should be deemed heretical which have been pronounced such by express declaration of Scripture, or by some one of the first four Councils, or by any subsequent Council, founding its decision on clear scriptural authority. You will observe, that the first Councils are recognised without limitation ; which necessarily implies that, until the middle of the fifth century, the current of tradition is considered by the Church of England to have flowed without spurious mixture. Self-evidently, then, by this admission, tradition is substantially, though still subordinately, acknowledged ; since, by that time, the body of Catholic tradition could not but be completed : from after ages it might receive additional confirmation, and, perhaps, elucidation ; but it clearly could not receive legitimate enlargement. In truth, some such limitation as that which was then fixed, is implied in the rule already quoted. The *quod semper* being added to



the *quod ubique* and the *quod ab omnibus*, obviously requires that later aberrations or adulterations should always be corrected by recurring to earlier steadiness and purity. The only question, then, can be, Where the line should be drawn between primeval truth and superinduced error? The Church of Rome itself thinks it right to make some such distinction between the first six centuries and those which follow, calling the writers of the earlier period, Fathers, and those that come after, Doctors. The Church of England has preferred a narrower limit; and, in doing so, she is remarkably countenanced by her own best earthly benefactor—Gregory the Great; who considered the first four Councils as being a kind of interesting resemblance to the four Gospels. At all events, we can be at no loss for traditional guidance, when we have the concurrent and accumulated light of four centuries and a half; which, you will observe, comes down twenty years below the death of St. Augustin.

If it should be objected, that the act I refer to has been variously modified, and that, in particular, the power of appointing commissioners to take cognisance of heresy, has been done away; I answer, that though, in compliance with a more tolerant spirit, the censure of heresies has ceased, the rule by which that censure was to be pronounced has never been retracted. The secular arm no longer interferes; but in moral and religious estimation, what were deemed heresies then, are equally to be so accounted at this day; and, by consequence, the same standard is to be resorted to, for individual direction, which was formerly

to be the guide in judicial proceedings. It is notorious that, from that period to the present, the theological principles then adopted have undergone no shadow of alteration: of course, the deference for tradition, expressed in the act, is as much as ever the sentiment of the Anglican Church.

I might adduce further evidences; but I confine myself to a canon passed by the Convocation of 1571. Its words are, “Imprimis vero (concionatores) videbunt ne quid unquam doceant, pro concione, quod a populo religiose teneri et credi velint, nisi quod consentaneum sit doctrinæ Veteris aut Novi Testamenti, quodque ex illâ ipsâ doctrinâ Catholici Patres et veteres Episcopi collegerint.” I think you will acknowledge that, while, in this canon, the use of tradition is clearly limited to the interpretation of Scripture, and, of course, no countenance given to either additional or co-ordinate authority; still, a regard to the interpretative light of tradition is made obligatory: and, consequently, what the writer in the “Christian Observer” insists upon, namely, the individual modelling his faith and conduct by his own interpretation of Scripture, without any reference to the authority of tradition, is as opposite to the doctrine of the Church of England as any one contradictory proposition can be to another. I need not observe that, by this canon, the sentiment of the writer is not only condemned, but condemned *a fortiori*. For, if preachers are bound not to depart from Catholic tradition in their interpretation of holy Scripture, the rule must be proportionably more imperative on individuals of the comparatively untaught mass.

As it would be easy to enlarge on this principle of the English Church, so I conceive there would be no difficulty in justifying the temperate course which she has, in this respect, pursued. The remarks made above upon the Fathers, as far as they are just, all hold good here; but common sense, itself, establishes the line of conduct. "If," says Dugald Stewart, "all our knowledge must ultimately rest on our own proper experience, the progress of science and the progress of human improvement must have been wonderfully retarded; for, if it had been necessary for each individual to form a classification of objects, in consequence of observations and abstractions of his own, and to infer, from the actual examination of particular facts, the general truths on which his conduct proceeds, human affairs would, at this day, remain nearly in the same state to which they were brought by the experience of the first generation." Is it not self-evident that the writer's doctrine would exactly realise, in the sacred science of theology, what Dugald Stewart deprecates in philosophy? Either the Divine word is so shallow, that no succeeding generation can penetrate deeper than that which went before, and thus religious light must remain stationary (in contradiction to the prophecy in Daniel, xii. 4), while all inferior lights are advancing in brightness; or, religious knowledge must be cultivated like all other knowledge, by using the information already accumulated in exploring what yet remains to be discovered. Is it not obvious, then, that the line chosen by the Anglican Church is that which conducts, most



certainly, to both sound and liberal improvement ? The soundness being ensured by the guidance made use of, and the liberality, by the enlightened principle on which this guidance is resorted to ? I say enlightened ; because, instead of herself pronouncing, like the Church of Rome, what the concurrent sense of the Catholic Church is, and making her decision ultimate, on pain of condign censure, the Church of England encourages all her competent children to make inquiry for themselves ; and, provided only the standard be adhered to, is not unwilling to stake her own claim to rectitude on the issue of such an investigation.

I have now said enough to prove that the writer in the "Christian Observer" is as far from being in unison with the Church of England, as the Church of England is from being in unison with the Church of Rome. I humbly conceive, nothing can be clearer than that, in the matter of Catholic tradition, the Anglican Church adopts the same temperate principle which she manifests in her creeds, her worship, and her ceremonies ; in all of which she so evinces her reverence for, and her reliance upon, the *consensus omnium*, as to make her general regard for tradition unquestionable, even had she less explicitly avowed it. It is, therefore, on the whole, impossible, at this day, to melt down the definite, though modest, character of the Anglican Church into the shapeless chaos of indefinite Protestantism ; and I should think, every truly philosophical mind must feel that such an attempt is not more to be despaired of than deprecated. How lamentable were it, that no alternative

existed, but everlasting imprisonment on the one hand, or everlasting vacillation on the other! Wretched would it be, that the human mind should always and every where be covered and fettered, respecting what most concerns it, by any thing like that despotism which the Church of Rome has exercised (and which we see the literal Church of Rome, at this moment, as much disposed to maintain as ever). But, I must say, more wretched still would it be, that no expedient could be found for disentangling the intricacies, harmonising the discords, and sobering the extravagances, which have grown, are growing, and must, in the nature of things, ever continue (without some new Pentecostal effusion) to grow, out of the mere unguided individual appeal to the letter of the bare written word: Such an expedient I alone perceive in the wise, but wonderful, temperament of our English Church; a temperament to which, in such times and circumstances, overruling Heaven only could have led her; and which, in truth, would have been lost again and again, if it had not been preserved by providential interpositions — individually surprising; but in their concurrence, I am ready to think, beyond all example.

It is very remarkable that the solidist defender of tradition, in that sober use of it which the Church of England contends for, was not, himself, a Church-of-England man, but was brought to embrace the principle merely by his own unprejudiced judgment: I mean Richard Baxter. It will be worth your while to read the second chapter of the second part of his Life of Faith. There is

more said there, to shew the necessity of tradition as an auxiliary to the written word, than I ever found in any other Protestant writer. He seems to me, however, to admit exactly what the Church of England admits; and to place the subject in a light equally intelligible and satisfactory. His differences, in theology, with several leading contemporaries, forced him to seek support for his views in the concurrent sense of antiquity; and the result of his inquiries was a cordial adoption of the ancient maxim (which he, himself, urges upon his adversaries), "*contra rationem nemo sobrius; contra Scripturam nemo Christianus; contra Ecclesiam nemo Catholicus.*"—(See ELY BATES'S Extracts from Baxter's Catholic Theology, &c.; second edition, p. 180.)

Than this, no doubt, nothing can be more dissonant from consistent Dissenterism, or, indeed, from pure Protestantism. The principle of the latter was avowed in that celebrated instrument which was delivered in 1529 to the Diet of Spire, and which gave rise to the appellation of Protestant. I will give you the words from Sleidan, because they are remarkable, and seldom quoted verbatim: "*Jam illud quod dicunt, Evangelium esse docendum juxta receptas ab Ecclesiâ et probatas interpretationes, Protestantes aiunt recte quidem habere, sed in eo litem esse quæ sit Ecclesiâ vera; cum autem nulla sit doctrina certior quam verbi Divini, cumque præter illud nihil doceri debeat; et quæ videntur obscuriora Scripturæ loca, non possunt rectius quam aliis ejusdem Scripturæ locis illustrioribus explicari, idcirco se permansuros in eo vestigio, et*



daturus operam ut Veteris atque Novi Testamenti scripta pure ac perspicue doceantur : *hanc enim unicam esse rationem plane certam et indubitatum, hominum vero traditiones nullo niti firmo fundamento.*”—SLEID. Comm. Franco Imt. 1610 ; pp. 159, 160.

It is because the Church of England so substantially rejects this principle, that I am in the habit of maintaining that she is not Protestant, but a reformed portion of the Church Catholic. That it was a natural tenet for the continental reformers to adopt, absorbed as they were in one terrific apprehension, need not be denied ; but, surely, in thus excluding every guidance but that of the text alone, they left themselves exposed to every wind of doctrine, and retained no recourse against the most pernicious errors. By this rule, any one man's interpretation of Scripture was as valid as any other man's ; and, consequently, no possibility would remain of ever reducing to harmony the infinite discord of religious opinions. There could be no accumulation of wisdom in the Church : Dugald Stewart's words would be exactly verified. Things, even at the last, must remain nearly in the same state to which they were brought by the experience of the first generation. But even this was not all : the principle adopted of explaining the more obscure, by the more obvious passages, involves a very strange, but self-evident, necessity of leaving unexplained whatever of Scripture is peculiarly sublime or profound. These last will naturally be the more obscure : they (generally) must be so, in the nature of things. If, then, the sense of such passages is to be limited by the mere

imports of plain and obvious passages, that which is sublime never can be reached—that which is profound never can be explored. Thus, the richest beauties, the highest excellences, the most vital mysteries, are morally certain to be overlooked; or if, through some remains of the rejected light of tradition, for a time acknowledged, liable to sink more and more into disrepute; until those recognitions of natural religion, which are necessarily the plainest parts of Scripture, are relied upon and rested in, as alone entitled to attention. Let only the rule of those patriarchs of Protestantism be carried as far as it will go, and what can be the result, but that frigidity which I suppose, and of which we have had so many actual exemplifications?

Some such apprehension is certainly beginning to be felt by those Dissenters who are zealous for the Catholic verities. However sternly attached to their system generally, they cannot but perceive, that to reject all guidance but that of Scripture, is to leave an opening for the worst enemies of Evangelic truth to maintain their warfare without check or obstacle. “Give us the written word,” say they, “without human comment, and we ask no more.” Bogue, for example, is so sensible of this, that, in his *History of Dissenters*, he pleads for those who, in the Arian controversy (1719), insisted on a subscription to human words. He says, most truly, that, “when the question was only concerning the meaning of the Scripture, it is difficult to say how that meaning could be expressed otherwise than in human words.” But, then, if there was any weight in the formula, thus offered

by a few well-meaning men of a particular age and country, how much greater should be the deference to the concurrent sense of successive ages and various nations? Nothing, surely, could be more inconsistent, than to claim respect for the one testimony, and to deny it to the other.

But Bogue is not thus inconsistent: he praises John Howe for consulting Fathers and schoolmen, as well as reformers and modern divines, before he finally settled his own theological creed. And, in a note on this part of his work, he strongly animadvertes on Dr. Campbell, the late Principal of Mareschal College, Aberdeen, for maintaining, in his divinity lectures, that students should form for themselves a system of Divinity "from the sacred Scriptures, without consulting commentators, or previously studying systematic writers in theology." After briefly stating the advantages to be derived from a wise use of commentators, and systematic writers, he observes, that, "to reject the light held out by the wisest and best of men, of every preceding age, and to determine on the most momentous affairs without deigning to consult them, is certainly not the result of the wisdom from above. It is directly contrary to the method which men pursue on every other subject, in which happiness is concerned." — *History of Dissenters*, vol. ii. pp. 219, 220.

This, you observe, is substantially Dugald Stewart's remark, applied to religion; and, in truth, is so obvious a dictate of common sense, as to make it impossible that it should ever have been overlooked, except the mental vision were impeded by the densest prejudice; yet, self-evidently,



it has been overlooked by all reformed denominations except the Anglican Church.

I must add another remarkable dissenting testimony, not barely to the utility, but necessity, of Catholic tradition. I say Catholic tradition, because no other imaginable resource could serve the purpose which he deems indispensable. The writer to whom I refer, is Foster; the fourth edition of whose *Essays* lies now before me. In that, "On the Aversion of Men of Taste to Evangelical Religion" (Letter 3d, p. 299, &c.), he remarks, that there are certain words, peculiar to the language of divines, for which equivalent terms cannot be found, except in the form of definition or circumlocution. These, he says, may be called, in a qualified sense, the technical terms of evangelical religion; and he reckons as such, "sanctification, grace, covenant, salvation, and a few others." He had been pleading for the relinquishment of other less essential words: these, however, he thinks must be retained. But then, to make that retention beneficial, or even safe, he conceives, 1st, that the Christian writer or speaker ought, instead of always using the peculiar term, occasionally to express at length, in other words, even at the expense of much circumlocution, the idea which he would have wished to convey had he used that peculiar term. Having illustrated this necessity by the practice in all other sciences, he proceeds, 2dly, to observe, that the urgency is much greater in religious science, because, in common sciences a felt want of definition will lead the learner to look for it; whereas, in religion, if definitions be

not given, the hearers will think they can define for themselves, and, of course, will be apt to rest in a set of confused ideas, without ever attaining to precision; or rather, as he shews in his 3d remark, will embrace positive error: it being evident from experience, that the use of terms may remain when the sense has been wholly perverted: and, there being also this striking difference between theological and all other technical terms, that when the latter cease to mean what they have been defined to mean, they cease to mean any thing; involving a change, merely, from knowledge to ignorance: while, on the other hand, in Christian theology, the change will be from truth to error, because the terms, from being less definite, admit of various meanings; all of which meanings, except the true meaning, must be more or less erroneous. His conclusion, therefore, on the whole, is (and a curious conclusion for a Dissenter I am obliged to deem it), that the words in question (namely, the technical words of the Gospel) “can be kept in one invariable signification, only by keeping that signification clearly in sight, by means of something separate from these words themselves.”

The sole remaining question, then, is, What is the separate something, adequate to ensure the wished-for object? Foster would say, the occasional use, by public teachers and writers, of explanatory language, either in connexion with, or instead of, the peculiar terms. But, if an invariable signification be the desideratum, how will this be secured by explanations and paraphrases,

however constant, however elaborate, of those who are themselves ever liable to—nay, as we see, ever undergoing, either conscious or unconscious alteration? Who can confute that assertion of Mrs. Barbauld's, that "a sect is never stationary, as it depends entirely on passions and opinions?" How visionary, then, in a sectarian, to reckon on the home production of any unvarying guidance! And yet, how deep the sense of want which dictated so inconsistent an admission! Were there any plausibility in the precise idea of Forster, how much more strongly would it hold good respecting established formulas! "The Dissenters," said a sensible, candid, and pious Dissenter, once to me (poor Parken, the editor of the "Eclectic Review"), "the Dissenters," said he, "are, perhaps, wrong in theoretically rejecting every thing but Scripture as their guide in matters of religion; I say theoretically, because the majority of them must undoubtedly take up their opinions practically, from the tuition, if not the authority, of their teachers. A Church has certainly an advantage in committing this mode of influence, this tuition, to an unalterable set of teachers, to printed forms and explicit articles."

But this merely puts the evil one step further off: it, perhaps, provides for a longer and more general acquiescence; but, when the public mind becomes bold enough to dispute the truth of the formula, how shall it be sustained, if it have nothing but itself to rely upon? How often were our formulas on the verge of rejection; and, had the turn of the scale been different, where would



have been even our pledge of invariable signification? No little variety of explanation has co-existed with our formulas: had they actually gone down, how endless and remediless had been the dissonance!

I cannot drop that strange idea (considering from whom it comes) of a separate something: that is, clearly something beside the written word. The terms of this latter are what need to be kept invariably significant; and the admission is, that to maintain such sameness of meaning, some collateral auxiliary to the written word is indispensable. If the sectarian, however sensible of the want, cannot point out a remedy; if even the most firmly established forms are in themselves, and merely as established, but a temporary palliative, and nothing more, how sagacious and provident was our Church, in keeping possession of the exclusive ground on which the necessary bulwark against error can be established! Or, rather, what cause have we to thank God, for being never suffered to part from that single rallying post which common sense approves, which experience has sanctioned, and which even honest prejudice would instinctively feel after, and wish to find! Can this separate something be any where realised, except in Catholic tradition, as soberly understood and solidly adhered to in the Church of England? And when we see Dissenters beginning to feel their want, may not we hope, that our temperament of principle will eventually be the general point of union to all extremes? Doubtless, we must first understand our own

special character, before we can hope to act attractively on others. The members of our Church, lay as well as clerical, must be enlightened by the peculiar truths, and animated by the distinguishing spirit, of the English Establishment, in order to their informing or engaging those around them: when this domestic improvement may be hoped for, I cannot venture to calculate. I wish there were even one or two capable of doing reasonable justice to the subject: were I qualified by internal fitness, I should still be incompetent from weak health; such a light labour as the present, being all that I am equal to.

It might, perhaps, be said, What has this question to do with individual edification? If I doubted its conduciveness to this result, I trust I would not give it so much either of my time or thoughts; but I certainly am persuaded, that, in a practical view, the principles I plead for, are invaluable: devotion of the sentimental kind, is easily kindled. There is much in human nature (let dogmatists say what they will) ready to catch the flame of impassioned religion; but the grand question is, How may the fire once lighted, be preserved from declension, and even extinction? I say, with all humility, thought and reflection must keep up what sensation has begun. "God is a spirit," said our Redeemer; "and they that worship Him, must worship Him in spirit and in truth." Spirit means, clearly, disposition or feeling, with which Divine grace may endue us, in any way that God pleases; but truth belongs to the understanding, and must be intellectually acquired. We must know the

truth, in order that the truth may make us free. Certain it is, that no researches, no acquirements, will quicken a dead soul: one might as well think of making a fire, without any thing to kindle it, by merely putting fuel together in a heap. But it is no less true, that, as a fire when kindled must be sustained by fuel, and its warmth and brightness will be in proportion to the quality of the matter by which it is fed, just so must the flame of devotion, when once kindled from heaven, be sustained and cherished by our own industrious and wise acquirements of heavenly truth; and it will be truth to us,—not merely in proportion to its intrinsic excellence and appositeness, but, also, in proportion to the solid and settled certainty with which we embrace it. To both these qualifications, I conceive, a due regard to Catholic tradition will be found eminently contributory. If there be any weight in the concurrent doctrine of Stewart, Bogue, and Foster, it is by cherishing such a regard, that their principle can alone be acted on. If all our knowledge is not to rest on our own proper experience; if we are to consult the light held out by the wisest and best men of every preceding age; and if we are to seek an invariable signification of Evangelical terms in the comments and paraphrases of Christian authors and speakers—ought we not to ascend upward in our research as far as the series of luminaries reaches? and, in proportion as we find exact agreement, must not our persuasion grow into settled matter-of-fact conviction? As I said above, in thus examining the successive witnesses of Evangelic virtue, we



enter "not into a mere school of human wisdom, but, as it were, into the laboratory of God himself;" where we find the Divine word authentically elucidated by the Divine operation. The "length and breadth, and depth and height" of the harmony appearing more and more to be such as God alone could have effected.

Is it not self-evident, then, that as these views increase in clearness, strength, and constancy, devotion will become proportionately deep, settled, and habitual? I am convinced that, ordinarily, the spiritual acting of the mind is made difficult by other causes besides actual moral corruption. It is physically painful to raise the animalised mind to objects so much beyond its natural sphere; and, when left a moment to itself, it sinks as much from weakness, as from want of wing, into a more congenial element than that of pure spiritual abstraction. To have access, then, to a region in which Divine truth may be found embodied and humanised, and in which, the more we advance, the more are even our natural feelings engaged and satisfied; until, as it were, reason becomes faith, and faith becomes reason. To have our range of mental apprehension thus enlarged and congenialised to our whole nature, will, assuredly, as much as any thing in this lower world can, facilitate our converse with things immortal and invisible. In countless instances, when we could not have, directly and without intermediate aid, embosomed ourselves in that light, which

"Brightest Seraphim

Approach not, but with both wings veil their eyes,"

we may first find our minds attracted, and our feelings enkindled, by contemplating the vast column of united and divinely supported minds who have gone on before us, and who leave, as it were, behind them a path of brightness, like the galaxy in the heavens, on which we rejoice to have entered; and following such a cloud of witnesses, cannot but anticipate the same support and the same glorious issue. What but this was it, which St. Paul has taught us to practise, in the eleventh and twelfth of the Hebrews? And do we catch the spirit of his example, if we do not now add the Christian cloud of witnesses which eighteen centuries have produced, to those which alone the Apostle could contemplate?

I could say much more on this (I must think interesting) point, but you can enlarge (if you approve the idea) on the hints I have given. To shew you, however, that others have deeply considered the question of Catholic tradition, and, on the most deliberate reflection, have attached to it all the moment of which I have endeavoured to give the idea, I will add rather a long quotation from Bishop Beveridge.

Multa sunt quæ licet in Sacris Scripturis expresse ac definite non legantur, communi tamen omnium Christianorum consensione ex iis eruuntur: e. g.—Tres distinctas in Sacrosanctâ Trinitate personas venerandas esse, Patrem, Filium, et Spiritum Sanctum: hos singulos verum esse Deum; et tamen unum tantummodo esse. Deum, Christum Θεανθρωπον esse, vere Deum ac vere hominem in unâ eâdemque personâ. Hæc et similia, quamvis totidem verbis ac syllabis nec in Veteri nec in Novo Testamento traduntur, de iis, tamen, ut utroque fundatis, inter

omnes semper convenit Christianos; demptis tantummodo paucis quibusdam hæreticis, quorum in religione haud major habenda est ratio, quam monstrorum in naturâ. Sic etiam infantes sacro baptismo abluendos esse, et sponsores ad illud sacramentum adhibendos, Dominicam, sive primam per singulas septimanas feriam, religiose observandam esse,—Passionis, resurrectionis, et ascensionis Domini ad cœlum, necnon Spiritus Sancti adventûs, commemorationem per singulos annos peragendam. Ecclesiam ubique per episcopos, a presbyteris distinctos, iisque prælatos, administrandam esse. Hæc et alia hujusmodi nusquam in Sacris Scripturis diserte ac nominatim præcipiuntur; sed, nihilominus, per mille et quadringentos ab Apostolis annos in publicum Ecclesiæ usum ubique recepta fuerunt; nec ullam intra illud tempus invenire est Ecclesiam in ea non consentientem. Adeo ut quasi communes sint notiones omnium ab origine Christianorum animis insitæ, non tam ex ullis particularibus Sacræ Scripturæ locis, quam ex omnibus; ex generali totius Evangelii scopo et tenore; ex ipsâ religionis in eo stabilitæ, naturâ et proposito; atque ex constanti, denique, Apostolorum traditione, qui ecclesiasticos hujusmodi ritus, et generales, ut ita loquar, Evangelii interpretationes, per universum terrarum orbem una cum fide propagarunt. Alioquin enim non credibile, immo vero impossibile prorsus esset, ut tam unanimi consensione ubique, et semper, et ab omnibus reciperentur.\*

Hisce præmissis, primo intuitu patet, quid ex iis consequetur: cum majorem enim omnibus quam singulis Christianis, et universæ quam particularibus quibuscunque Ecclesiis, fidem habendam esse nemo dubitet; cum plurima etiam sint in quæ universalis Ecclesia, per multa post Apostolos secula, consensit; cum hæc, denique, universalis

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\* I think all this substantially true; but I imagine the case of Catholic tradition might, by being more analytically explained, be placed on yet stronger ground. I have briefly attempted this in page 291.



Ecclesiæ consensio certissima sit, in iis quibus habeatur capitibus Sacræ Scripturæ interpretatio: hinc clarissime constat quali quantoque usui sint antiqui Patres, aliique omnium Ecclesiæ seculorum scriptores, quamque necessario ab iis consulendi sint quibus ecclesiasticas agitantibus controversias, vel sua salus, vel pax Ecclesiæ cordi est: si nulla enim veteris Ecclesiæ commentaria, nulla conciliorum acta, nulla historiæ ecclesiasticæ monumenta hodie extarent, quantis in tenebris circa ipsam nostram religionem versaremur? Quam facile esset subtili cuivis hæretico, vel sceleratissimo etiam impostori, pietatis speciem præ se ferenti, verba plerisque dare, eosque in perniciosissimos omnium generum errores inducere?

Quot, denique, et quanta cujusque modi incommoda hinc exorirentur? Sed nihil est quod iis enumerandis immoremur, cum inter tot tantasque imperiorum confusiones, ecclesiarum singularium tumultus, omniumque rerum humanarum perturbationes, sapientissimâ benignissimâque Dei Opt. Max. providentiâ ita comparatum sit, ut ab ipsis Apostolicis usque ad hæc nostra tempora, nulla sit ætas cujus ecclesiastica nobis monumenta non conservantur. E quibus, propterea, perfectam universalis Ecclesiæ ideam animo concipere, et pro comperto certoque habere possumus; quid per omnia secula admissum fuit, et quid rejectum; qui ritus et dogmata obtinuerunt; quæ hæreses et schismata explosa sunt et condemnata. Ex iis, denique, iisque solis, videre licet de quibus doctrinis disciplinisque inter omnes perpetuo Ecclesias convenit, et de quibus inter eas controversum est; adeoque, quid magis quidque minus necessarium est creditu et observatu. Quidquid enim de aliis dicendum est, ea saltem in quæ omnes ubique Ecclesiæ consenserunt, non possunt non certissima esse et necessario ab omnibus etiamnum retinenda.—*Proæmium Codici Canonum Eccles. Prin.*

I have thus been led, by your mention of the "Tour to Alet," to enter into a subject which,

when I began to write, I had no thought of adverting to, except so far as it was implied in the observations on the Fathers. I am not sorry, however, to have given you these ideas in a form which I hope will fit them for impartial consideration. I mean, that I have endeavoured to bring into the narrowest compass the strength of the cause. You have sometimes asked me, "What is Catholicity?" The authorities from the Church of England, and the quotation from Bishop Beveridge, give you, at least, a definite, and, I should hope, a tolerably satisfactory answer.

Assure Mrs. Harford of my cordial affection and regard. I now repeat in September what I said in July, though both sayings come to you together,—that if Providence gives me strength again to go to England, Mrs. H. and you will be amongst my sincere inducements.

I began to write at Bellevue, and I finish in Dublin; where I mean to be, at least, for the next two months. I shall be sincerely gratified by hearing from you; and I will, as soon as possible, finish another long and, I fear, tedious letter respecting the Epistle to the Ephesians.

Adieu. Believe me,

Most faithfully and cordially yours,

ALEXANDER KNOX.

Dawson Street, Sept. 25, 1814,

LETTER TO THE REV. JAMES DUNN, ON THE  
IMPOSSIBILITY OF UNION BETWEEN THE  
CHURCHES OF ENGLAND AND OF ROME.

MY DEAR MR. DUNN,

IN a note, some days ago, to Mrs. —, you expressed a wish to know what I thought of Dr. Doyle's project of union between his Church and ours. I do not hesitate, therefore, to give you my view of the subject; which I might do with safety, were you less trustworthy than you are, because it will not subject me to the slightest suspicion of being popishly inclined.

I think, then, in brief, that any project of our uniting with the Roman Catholic Church is not deeply alarming, only because it is utterly impracticable. There are essential differences between the two Churches, which admit of no accommodation. To concede in those matters would be, in us, unfaithfulness to our providential trust; and, in them, gross inconsistency. But on such points as I refer to, they would not concede a hair-breadth; nor could they, without unlocking their entire arch. They, therefore, could only indulge us in modified explanations, in the prospect of afterwards drawing us, by subtility or by force, from such modifications, as, in the first instance, the enlarge-



ment of their Church might have made it expedient to yield to, but merely with the design of re-explanation as soon as it would be practicable.

More than this, in matters of faith they could not do. These, with them, are unrevisable; though, certainly, not undisguisable. They would hide the teeth and claws in a cloak of specious gentleness, until the silly sheep are fairly within the wolf's den. They have, in fact, fully shewn the hollowness as much as the plausibility of their professions in every former attempt of this kind; and what we have in Bossuet's Life, respecting his correspondence with the Lutheran Molanus, sufficiently exemplifies the spirit and purpose which must ever characterise their overtures of pacification.

We know they have a power of purchasing essential submission to their Church, by allowing the sacrament of the eucharist in both kinds, a liturgy in the vernacular dialect, and the marriage of secular priests. But further than this they could not proceed; except just as far as Bossuet has proceeded in his "Exposition," which was written to the extent of possibility, for conciliating the new proselytes in France, at the time of the revocation. And suppose, in any instance, those matters of discipline to be relaxed, how long would the relaxation last? I believe, exactly until it might be practicable to refuse it.

The remains of original Catholicity in the Roman Catholic Church I value and venerate; and I do not view their religious practices in the same criminating temper that so many others feel toward them. I cannot give hard names to errors,

whether speculative or practical, which may co-exist with the love of God, and spiritual purity of heart. Πλεονεξία of any kind is, in my judgment, far more real idolatry than any conceivable worship of saints or angels; and as to the adoration of the eucharistic elements, though I think it a most unreasonable practice, and a gross disfiguration of Christian worship, yet I cannot deem it in any respect, or on any ground, idolatrous. I am ready to think, too, that the defects of ultra Protestantism are as injurious to true piety as the excesses of the Roman Catholic Church; and that they are even more so in their consequences. I, besides, am not sure but that the metaphysical inventions of some of their warmest opponents are not fully as unscriptural, as purgatory or extreme unction.

But, whatever may be my indulgent feeling about such matters, there are others which, to me, appear like a great gulf between us and them. For example, the kind of authority which is claimed by the Church of Rome over the mind and conscience, appears to me a tyranny, equally opposite to reason and Holy Scripture; and such as it would be unpardonable madness, in those who have been providentially rescued from it, again to yield to, in any degree or form; and yet this is a claim which the Church of Rome can neither relinquish nor compromise: for to compromise it would be to relinquish it: if it were modified in any honest way, it would lose that simple decisiveness in which its very nature consists, and which, in fact, is the main-spring of their whole spiritual polity.

But to what does this claim amount? To no less than a total subjugation of every faculty of the inner man, in the great business of religion. On this vital subject, no man must think but as the tribunal of the Church prescribes. He may indulge his fancy on points not decided; but, wherever a decision has been made, he must inquire no further, but submit implicitly and without reserve: this is the grand principle on which every thing else depends. Can we, whom Providence has blessed with mental liberty, give this plan of bondage any countenance? If we do, we impair our title to the richest blessing yet bestowed by Providence on the Christian Community; if we refuse to countenance it, or to yield to such present concessions as would eventually complete our enthralment, we need not enter into any discussion; for, I repeat, the Roman Catholic Church cannot relax on this point without losing the very essence of her distinctive system.

“Be not children in understanding,” said St. Paul to the Corinthians. “In wickedness, be ye children; but, in understanding, be ye men.” It is our adoption of this principle which constitutes an irreconcilable difference between us and the Church of Rome. To keep their disciples children in understanding, not less than in wickedness, is the acknowledged determination of those who have successively formed the tribunal of that Church. We, who have been called to liberty, and have learned the value as much as we feel the authority of St. Paul’s injunction, must resist that claim *in limine*; and I am persuaded that, by



doing so, we shall escape the trouble of all further controversy.

But, you will observe, that I by no means say that this mental despotism has been always and every where an evil : I rather think that, for many ages, to keep the people children in understanding was indispensable to the keeping them children in wickedness ; when an advanced state of society made a more liberal discipline at once safe and expedient, it was resorted to, in the measure and extent which Divine Providence saw fitting. We see that while a large portion of Western Christendom was forced from the ancient yoke, at least an equal portion has been kept under the former bondage ; doubtless, this method has been chosen with the profoundest wisdom. But, while I conceive it suggests to us the duty of tenderness and charitable judgment towards the great mass of our unreformed fellow Christians, who, clearly, have no more fault in being what they are, than we have merit in being what we are ; still, I am no less sure, that they who have been called to liberty are to guard that distinguished privilege with the most vigilant caution ; and not to admit the minutest portion of the old dominion, lest that which obtained entrance as a pigmy should speedily grow into a Briareus.

The jealousy which St. Paul expressed lest Christian converts should be again entangled in the yoke of Jewish bondage, is, in my mind, quite applicable to our state with respect to the Roman Catholic Church. Nothing could be more amiable than the wish of the Apostle, to consult the feel-

ings of conscientious Jews ; nothing more determined than his opposition to every attempt at vitiating the free spirit of Christianity with that of Jewish servitude. I think this ought, in substance, to be our rule of conduct towards our Roman Catholic fellow Christians : it strikes me, that there is a great similitude in the two cases ; and I cannot but wish that they who are so zealous to proselyte Roman Catholics, were to take St. Paul's mode of proceeding with Jews into their serious consideration. It was his most anxious desire to bring as many of those native sheep into Christ's fold as was possible ; but not by withdrawing them from that which they had received by tradition from their fathers. He always acknowledged that they might be true Christians, and yet retain their attachment to the Law of Moses. He rather appears to prefer their continuance in their old habits,—“ In the calling,” says he, “ wherein any man is called, therein let him abide with God.” And, as an instance, he enjoins, that “ if any man be called, being circumcised, let him not become uncircumcised ; ” that is, clearly, let him not make it a point to relinquish Jewish peculiarities : such liberality to our Roman Catholic fellow Christians I wish we could exercise. But, I imagine, we must be better initiated into St. Paul's true doctrine and spirit, before we shall be either disposed or fitted to imitate his conciliatory conduct.

Perhaps you may think it strange that I should be so tenacious of mental liberty, and, at the same time, place so much value on adherence to our

Established Church ; but, more probably, you yourself are well aware that the authority claimed by our Church is of a perfectly different kind from that claimed by the Church of Rome. Our Church pretends to no decisive control of men's minds and consciences ; in all matters which affect everlasting salvation, she herself bows implicitly to the written word, and pronounces it, in that greatest concern, the exclusive standard. She is far from limiting the Church of Christ to her own pale ; she regards herself only as a genuine and sound portion of the co-harmonised and firmly compacted body ; and she exercises no other authority than that, without which she could not have preserved for one hour, either her own organic character, or her co-organisation with the body at large.

In fact, her authority is confined to those two great objects,—public worship and public instruction : without uniformity in these two instances, the very being of a Church would be lost : the individual Christian would have no security, that, in his next attendance on public worship, his pious feelings might not be outraged or his faith perverted. If to be “ tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine ” be a calamitous state, the necessity of some adequate preservation is self-evident. To afford such a preservation, less definitive measures than those of the Church of England would, I conceive, be unavailing : she, accordingly, says to all, “ If you continue with me you must submit to my guidance in all public acts of religion ; ” but she holds out no threat of everlasting damnation to those who leave her fold.



She rejoices only in such followers as are liberal and enlightened; though she cherishes and fosters all that are humble and self-diffident. And where could the latter class be more safe; or the former class find more solid satisfaction? Yet, were the Church of England to exercise less authority than she has hitherto exerted, what pledge would remain for the same satisfaction, or the same safety?

I, therefore, feel myself entirely consistent in depreciating the authority claimed by the Church of Rome, and in deeply valuing that which is exercised by the Church of England. I cannot but regard the former, however overruled for important good, as the main movement in the "mystery of iniquity;" whereas, in the latter, I seem to myself to see the most valuable gift that Divine Providence has yet conferred on the Christian world. The entire institute which has been thus preserved to us, and which could no otherwise have been preserved, in my mind, rises far above all verbal appreciation. The united testimony of the best understandings and the finest feelings in the most highly qualified community upon earth is itself powerful, and, I should think, not to be reasonably resisted; but, far beyond this, the esoteric disciple of the Church of England has an incommunicable, though perfectly explainable, "witness in himself," that her sanctuary is, in a degree, yet unmatched on this earth, a vestibule to "the holiest."

In adhering, therefore, to the Church of England, and in deferring to that authority which she

exercises, I am rationally owning the rule of Providence, and wisely availing myself of its beneficence. Were I ignorant and uninformed, what folly would it be for me to leave this land-locked harbour, and commit myself to the trackless and tempestuous sea of unsettled religion? And, using all the light I can collect from things present or past, where could I hope, equally or similarly, to find rest for my soul; yet, wherein would this rest consist, or, where might it have long since been, had our Church been guarded by less strict uniformity?

But, against the Church of Rome I have further to maintain, that the ground on which she rests her claim is as fallacious, as the claim itself is exorbitant. She pretends to support herself by the agreement of the Catholic Church; but I venture to assert, that this agreement is directly against her on the point in question, and that the Church of England has substantially adopted the primitive principle. The latter has revered and yielded to the true and legitimate authority of the Catholic Church, in honestly keeping in her view the "*quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est.*" The Church of Rome has, in point of fact, regarded that authority just as far as it served her purpose; and, to prevent all difficulty on this head, has professedly and imperatively turned the view of her disciples from the *consensus omnium* to the decision of the existing Church tribunal.

Vincentius Lirinensis, whom the Roman Catholic writers are fond to quote, makes it the duty of each individual Christian, in case the great body of

the Visible Church should appear to deviate into error, instead of following the existing Church, to adhere to pure antiquity. If such be the duty of an individual, it is still more that of a large body. And, what else did the Church of England at the Reformation, than follow the spirit of Vincentius's principle? And, it may even now be asked, Where, except by the Church of England alone, has this principle been practically and consistently maintained?

I said, that the Roman Catholic writers are fond of quoting Vincentius; but they even circulate a translation of his work, and call it a golden treatise. Yet, certain it is, that the appeal of individual Christians to antiquity, which he recommends and enjoins, is represented, even by the more moderate of their Church, to lead to, if not to be a symptom of, heresy. For, to have recourse to antiquity, against an apprehended misguidance of the present Church, is, at once, to dispute the decisive authority of the present Church, and to exercise one's own judgment; inasmuch as it is the business of judgment to discern and ascertain that agreement of wise and holy men in past ages, which constitutes what, in Jeremiah, is called "the old paths," wherein, it is there said, we shall find rest to our souls.

But, the Church of Rome is not only jealous of reference to antiquity in her individual members, but is herself disposed to regard its guidance with convenient limitation. The Abbé Fleury's reflections on modern laxity of discipline, and degeneracy of devotion, brought upon him the



resentment of the papal partisans, on the very ground of his subjecting the existing Church to the standard of the ancient Church; "as if," says one of them, "the Church had either lost or abused the power which she received from her Divine Founder, to govern and instruct; or as if she were no longer guided by that unerring spirit, which, by Christ, is promised to remain with her through every age to the end of time. The Abbé Fleury has the assurance to assert, that, through the undue influence of her school divines, through the forgeries of her librarians, through the ignorance, in fine, and supine negligence of her bishops, the Church has fatally deviated from the path of wise antiquity." I believe the sentiments here expressed may be regarded as a true specimen of the principles which are acted upon in the Church of Rome; and our only conclusion can be, that, the government of that Church is a despotism which admits of no restraints but those of subtle policy and present expediency; and is, therefore, neither to be trusted nor treated with, though its offers were, in appearance, ever so plausible.

I have, however, no shadow of apprehension that our Church will ever be deluded by such artifices, as are, in truth, all such overtures. I do not mean, that they were such in the intention of Archbishop Wake's correspondents, for they were men of worth and integrity; but, I conceive, no overtures nor concessions which would not be deceitful and fallacious, could, without a miracle, come from the constituted authorities of the Roman Catholic Church.

And, I believe, such a miracle is not likely to be performed. The intimations of prophecy point another way: the Church of Rome, properly so called,—I mean, the ecclesiastical monarchy of which Rome is the seat,—appears clearly to be destined for signal malediction. Until the eve of that catastrophe, the mixture of true Israelites with the men of Babylon, appears to be permitted; but when the final calamities are approaching, a cry will be heard, by all who have ears to hear, “Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her plagues.” There will, therefore, be no union of already enfranchised Israelites with that Babylon, from which those who, till a late period, will be permitted to reside in her, shall at length be withdrawn.

But, such a summons supposes a *terminus ad quem*, as well as a *terminus a quo*. It supposes a Jerusalem to which those emigrants from Babylon may betake themselves. In a word, it would seem to imply, that the Holy City, which had been so long trodden down by the Gentiles, shall, by that time, have been so re-edified, and shall be so distinguishable and conspicuous, as to leave, to willing and honest minds, no doubt of the course they should steer, and of the quiet habitation and sure resting-place which was to be their asylum. On a comparison of the Old Testament prophecies with the Apocalypse, a provision of this kind, an indubitable and authenticated centre of the Catholic Church, appears to be ensured: “a city at unity with itself, whither the tribes may go up;”

where shall be "the seat of judgment, even the seat of the House of David."

But, is there any prognostic of such a provision, or is there, in any part of the yet trodden down city, a visible commencement of the promised re-edification? I deliberately answer, that, whether I consider the form, the spirit, or the singular history of our Anglican Church, I think it wonderfully substantiates such an idea. That it is a part of the city, and not to be comprehended in the other figure of preserved Christianity (the woman in the wilderness), is proved by its retention of the same organisation, and, in substance, the same liturgical services that it had originally; as well as by its continued communion, in the matter of holy orders, exclusively with the yet unreformed portion of the Catholic Church. I could argue this point much further, but I think enough is found to establish my position in the slightest comparative view of our castellated structure, exhibiting so much of its ancient grandeur, and the homely tabernacles in which reformed Christianity, in every other instance, finds a shelter rather than a seemly abode.

But, that there is a treading down by the Gentiles, in our portion of the Holy City, though not as gross and unrestrained as elsewhere, may, I think, too clearly be shewn. It is remarkable, that, in our Reformation, the papal power was not simply rejected, but was, as far as it could be by a lay personage, assumed by our sovereign. This assumption, after ceasing in Mary, was claimed



and exercised by Elizabeth, under the solemn sanction of Parliament. Hence arose the High Commission Court, from which the Church of England received her greatest scandals; and it was only at the Revolution that this dishonour was got rid of. But, still, the supremacy so much remains, as to keep the Church under *their* predominant influence, who ask, "What shall we eat, what shall we drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed?" In truth, who can look around him with an enlightened eye, and not perceive that our portion of the Catholic Church is as really, though not as revoltingly, "trodden down by the Gentiles," as ever were our unreformed neighbours of the Gallican Church? Other reformed communions do not present this appearance; because (to use another sacred metaphor) they have no branches in which the birds of the air can lodge. I, therefore, do not make these remarks in the way of complaint, as if our Church loses, on the whole, by its liability to such abuse: I believe rather, that it would be far less fitted for great eventual purposes, if it were not now an alluring nestling-place for unconscious agents in the yet permitted mystery of iniquity.

But, even now, the developed and depurated good which our Church exhibits to its honest and cordial members, richly compensates for those remaining marks of captivity and desolation, which, after all, are the proofs of its union with the great organised mass, of whose ultimate liberation and *Αποκαταστασις*, I cannot but hope that itself is intended to be the centre of attraction. I humbly

conceive, that this supposition alone explains the mysterious order of Providence respecting the Anglican Church; that, at once, its interior spirit and tendency should be so pure, so sublime, so simply and superlatively evangelical, breathing the very air of the four Gospels; while its outward administration should be so secular and political, and, what is strangest of all, that this very subjugation to the state, should have served to protect and perpetuate its internal excellences; for, had the principles of the English Church been under no other guarantee than that of her ecclesiastical chiefs, could we say, what, by this time, they might have become? I conceive, it might be demonstrated that (if individuals) individuals only, and those in a very small number, have for the last hundred years, either relished or apprehended the profound interiority of those forms of worship with which they were officially conversant. Could those, therefore, who made no great estimate of the treasure, be its competent or certain preservers? But those forms, having become as a tablet built into the lofty structure of the national constitution, were guarded with jealous care, as a part of that constitution, by those who could least appreciate the intrinsic worth of that which they were preserving.

Thus far, then, I conceive, we can discover the hand of Providence; and, may I not add, "Whoso is wise, will ponder these things, and he shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord?" The inference I would on the whole dare to make, is, that a providential apparatus so

singularly elaborate, must be destined for some proportioned purpose. I see, besides, the wonderful temperament of the English political constitution already beginning to serve, not merely a local, but an extended use. It is looked up to as a model, wherever there is a liberal and sober wish to promote the civil happiness of a community. When attention is drawn as much to religious happiness, will not the temperament of our Church be found as worthy of imitation as the temperament of our State? And may it not be manifest, that Britain was separated from the Continent, by Him unto whom are known all his works from the foundation of the world; that, in that laboratory of Providence, effectual means might be prepared for the eventful restoration of the nations to the destined fulness of moral health and happiness?

By what further methods our Church is to be fitted for this high distinction, I pretend not to pronounce; but sure I am, that our present duty is to keep our treasures and our privilege "whole and undefiled:" we are wonderfully equidistant from puritanism on the one hand, and from popery on the other. In the Roman Catholic Church, I think I see a mysteriously permitted Christian Judaism; a renewed yoke of rites and ceremonies for a semi-barbarous Christian public. In the religious system of Puritans (taking that term in its widest sense) I cannot discover more than an analogously renewed baptism of John. In the religion of the Church of England, alone, I perceive Christianity itself, as it appears to me, in the genuine spirit of



its Divine Founder; and yet, rather as if in a rose-bud than in that adequate developement to which, if George Herbert's sentiment be felt and acted on, I doubt not, it will in due time be brought.

But, dearest mother (what those miss),  
The mean, thy praise and glory is,  
And long may be!

Blessed be God, whose love it was,  
To double moat thee with His grace,  
And none but thee.

Most truly yours,

A. K.

LETTER TO JOSEPH COWPER WALKER, ESQ. ON  
THE POETRY OF WILLIAM COWPER.

DEAR SIR,

January 19th, 1802.

IF my conduct toward you were as bad in reality as it is in appearance, I should deserve to have this letter returned to me the moment you saw my name subscribed to it; but the truth is, I have been a very unwilling defaulter. I was much obliged by your first letter informing me of Mr. Hayley's progress in Cowper's Life, and sat down speedily to answer it; but, from increasing indisposition, aggravated by the severity of the winter, I became so incapacitated, that I assure you, I believe I exhausted above half a quire of paper in repeated and abortive attempts to communicate to you the few thoughts which were passing through my mind. I wish I could now say I were better; but I can no longer delay, at least, to ask your forgiveness, and to assign the real cause of so continued an inattention to kindnesses which so justly claimed not only a grateful, but a prompt, acknowledgment.

If I could make any observation respecting Mr. Cowper worth communicating to your friend, it is probably now too late. Facts I had none. My own state of health, when last in England,

prevented me from availing myself of one opportunity, at least, of knowing a good deal of his habits of life. As it was, I gained no knowledge except what was given to the public in a sermon preached at Olney by a dissenting minister, on occasion of Mr. Cowper's death. It is, in some respects, a strange composition; at least, it must appear so to all who hold different sentiments from its author. As, however, it contains several curious particulars which may be new to you, I will send it with this. It will inform you fully about his Sacred Hymns, and afford you two or three specimens.

I have only to add, on this head, that the first edition of this sermon contained some details which (I have understood at the desire of Mr. Cowper's connexion, probably Lady Hesketh) were omitted in the second. They related to his attempts on his own life: and I own, I think they should have been retained, as the excellent man's memory could not, in any respect, suffer from them, being so exclusively the effect of malady. But, even the mental malady of such a man is to the philosophic observer of human nature a subject of curious, though of sympathising, inquiry.

If Mr. Hayley is still open to communications, I imagine the Duncombe family might be applied to with advantage. Possibly you know, that in Duncombe's Horace there are, at least, two satires translated by Cowper. One, the journey to Brundisium; the other, "*Ibam forte viâ sacrâ.*" The British Critic (vol. ii. 1798, page 410), in reviewing Boscawen's Horace, quotes a passage from the latter as being "rendered with great spirit."



“ Demitto auriculas ut iniquæ mentis asellus  
Cum gravius dorso subiit onus”—

“ No ass with double paniers racked,  
Oppress'd, o'erladen, broken-back'd,  
E'er look'd a thousandth part so dull  
As I, or half so like a fool.”

But what I mention those translations—or, rather, imitations—for, is, that they shew an early connexion between our poet and that family, a fact which is still further evinced by the manner in which Mr. William Duncombe speaks of Dr. Cowper (the poet's father), in one of his letters to Archbishop Herring. The letter I allude to is in the “Elegant Epistles,” page 552. It contains a specimen of the doctor's poetry, taken from an epistle written by him, at an early period of life, to the Duke of Chandos. (I think I have seen the whole in another publication of the *Duncombes*, if I mistake not, “*Hughes' Letters*”). It is not as nervous as his son's, but it has much of the same *moral* spirit, and, indeed, I think other similar characters also. Lest you should not have the collection mentioned above at hand, I will transcribe the passage—

“ Good natur'd wit, a talent is from heav'n,  
For noblest purposes to mortals giv'n,  
Studious to please, it seeks not others' harm,  
Cuts but to heal, and fights but to disarm :  
It cheers the spirits, smooths the anxious brow,  
Enlivens industry, and chases wo ;  
In beauteous colours dresses homespun truth,  
And wisdom recommends to heedless youth :  
At vice it points the strongest ridicule,  
And shames to virtue every vicious fool :

Like you, my Lord, it all mankind invites ;  
 Like you, instructs them, and, like you, delights."

Nothing, I think, can be plainer than that, in some of these lines, he had in view that beautiful passage in Horace's Epistle to Augustus—"Os tenerum pueri balbumque poeta figurat," &c. ; and he has turned some expressions almost with the felicity of his son ; for instance,

"Inopem solatur et ægrum :"  
 "Enlivens industry, and chases wo."

I hope Mr. Hayley has it in contemplation to collect all the "*disjecta membra poetæ*," so as to provide for the publication of a complete classical edition. Many of his less studied compositions, which he wrote on the spur of occasion, at the desire or on the hint of one friend or another, are no doubt scattered up and down ; and I cannot help thinking, that every such fragment, let the subject be what it may, would, when found, reward the search, and prove worthy to be preserved. The last small edition of his poems contains an epitaph on a hare which lived with him nine years ; and, though it seems to aim at no more than the style of "Chevy Chase," and, in fact, affords little more scope for poetry than a shop-bill, in his hands it acquires both beauty and humour of a kind not to be met with but in the *jeux d'esprit* of the richest and best-formed minds. Perhaps I am partial to Cowper from some accidental associations of ideas in which I have, as it were, met my own views. But I cannot help thinking, that in his merest trifles there is a

peculiar character of sweet *naïveté*, of which Tibullus's words would perhaps be the justest description :—

“ Quicquid agit, quoquo vestigia flectit,  
Componit furtim subsequiturque decor.”

I cannot help expressing a wish, that, if a complete edition of Cowper should be published, his four imitations from Vincent Bourne might be accompanied by the originals. Without a comparison of both, it is impossible to appreciate the merit of Cowper. Read as original poems, they may probably be considered as among the most trifling of his compositions; but, on comparing them with the Latin, every classical reader must greatly admire them. His powers as a translator were certainly of the highest kind.

As Vincent Bourne's “ *Poemata* ” are not very common in this country, you may possibly not have them within your reach. As I wish to give you the means of judging for yourself of Cowper's felicity in those imitations, I will therefore transcribe two of the originals :—

#### THE JACKDAW AND THE CRICKET.

##### *Cornicula.*

“ Nigras inter aves avis est, quæ, plurima, turres,  
Antiquas ædes, celsaque fana colit.  
Nil tam sublime est quod non audace volatu  
Aeriis spernens inferiora, petit.  
Quo nemo ascendat, cui non vertigo cerebrum  
Corripiat, certe hunc seligit illa locum.  
Quo, vix, a terrâ tu suspicis absque tremore,  
Illa metûs expers incolumisque sedet.



Lamina, delubri supra fastigia, ventus  
 Quâ cœli spiret de regione, docet;  
 Hanc ea præ reliquis mavult, secura pericli,  
 Nec curat, nedum cogitat unde cadat.  
 Res inde humanas, sed summa per otia spectat,  
 Et nihil ad sese, quas videt, esse videt.  
 Concursus spectat plateâque negotia in omni,  
 Omnia pro nugis at sapienter habet.  
 Clamores quos infra audit, si forsitan audit,  
 Pro rebus nihili negligit, et crocitat.  
 Ille tibi invidet felix cornicula pennas,  
 Qui sic humanis rebus abesse velit."

## AD GRILLUM. ANACREONTICUM.

## I.

O qui meæ culinæ  
 Argutulus choraules  
 Et hospes es canorus,  
 Quacunque commoreris  
 Felicitatis omen;  
 Jucundiore cantu  
 Si quando me salutes  
 Et ipse te rependam,  
 Et ipse quâ valebo  
 Remunerabo musâ.

## II.

Diceris innocensque  
 Et gratus inquilinus,  
 Nec victitans rapinis  
 Ut sorices voraces  
 Muresve curiosi,  
 Furumque delicatum  
 Vulgus domesticorum:  
 Sed tutus in camini  
 Recessibus, quiete  
 Contentus et calore.

## III.

Beatior cicadâ  
 Quæ te referre formâ;  
 Quæ voce te videtur;  
 Et saltitans per herbas  
 Unius, haud secundæ  
 Ætatis est chorista;  
 Tu carmen integratum  
 Reponis ad Decembrem,  
 Lætus per universum  
 Incontinenter annum.

## IV.

Te nulla lux relinquit,  
 Te nulla nox revisit;  
 Non musicæ vacantem,  
 Curisve non solutum.  
 Quin amplius canendo,  
 Quin amplius fruendo  
 Ætatulam, vel omni  
 Quam nos homunciones  
 Absumimus querendo  
 Ætate longiorem.

I almost think you will agree with me, that, contrary to the usual issue of translation, Cowper is more nervous and spirited than Bourne. In this latter poem they both must have had Cowley's "Grashopper" in view, but I cannot help thinking that on this single occasion, in poetic beauty, Cowley still retains the superiority. In no instance, I conceive, was he more successful than in that Anacreontic; and yet that stanza of Cowper comes near him, even in his best passages:—

“ Though in shape and voice they be  
Formed as if a-kin to thee,  
Thou surpassest, happier far,  
Happiest grashoppers that are.  
Theirs is but a summer song,  
Thine endures the winter long;  
Unimpair'd and shrill and clear,  
Melody throughout the year.”

No doubt, you recollect the passages in Cowley to which the above stanza may be supposed to refer. Indeed, the whole seems to have been in view. But a few lines will suffice to prove the certainty of the allusion:—

“ Happy insect! what can be  
In happiness compared to thee?  
Fed with nourishment divine,  
The dewy morning's gentle wine;  
Nature waits upon thee still,  
And thy verdant cup doth fill;  
'Tis filled wherever thou dost tread,  
Nature's self's thy Ganymede;

Thou dost drink, and dance, and sing,  
 Happier than the happiest king ;  
 All the fields which thou dost see,  
 All the plants belong to thee ;  
 All that summer hours produce,  
 Fertile made with early juice ;  
 Man for thee does sow and plough ;  
 Farmer he, and landlord thou !”

The superiority of Cowley seems chiefly to arise from the natural adjuncts of his subject ; and he certainly has made an exquisite use of them. What he owes to the ode of Anacreon, from which he borrows it, I cannot tell, having never looked at it.

I think it likely that Mr. Cowper availed himself occasionally of his reading, both for hints and materials. I have, however, examined him so little in that view, as to be unable to state more than one or two instances. The first I shall mention, if it proves that he borrowed thoughts, demonstrates still more strikingly his faculty of enriching them by new graces and ornaments :—

“ Again, the band of commerce was design’d  
 T’ associate all the branches of mankind ;  
 And if a boundless plenty be the robe,  
 Trade is the golden girdle of the globe ;  
 Wise to promote whatever end he means,  
 God opens fruitful Nature’s various scenes ;  
 Each climate needs what other climes produce,  
 And offers something to the general use :  
 No land but listens to the common call,  
 And, in return, receives supply from all.



This general intercourse and mutual aid,  
Cheers what were else a universal shade;—  
Calls nature from her ivy-mantled den,  
And softens human rock-work into men.”

“ Nature,” says Addison, “ seems to have taken a particular care to disseminate her blessings amongst the different regions of the world with an eye to this mutual intercourse and traffic amongst mankind, that the natives of the several parts of the globe might have a kind of dependence upon one another, and be united together by their common interest. Almost every degree produces something peculiar to it. If we consider our own country in its natural prospect, without any of the benefits and advantages of commerce, what a barren uncomfortable spot of earth falls to our share ! Nor has traffic more enriched our vegetable world, than it has improved the whole face of nature among us. For these reasons, there are not more useful members in a commonwealth than merchants. They knit mankind together in a mutual intercourse of good offices, distribute the gifts of nature, find work for the poor, and wealth to the rich, and magnificence for the great.”

I should imagine it can hardly be doubted, that Mr. Cowper had in recollection this passage while he was composing the above beautiful lines.

The other instance, which I had in view, is of a more peculiar kind ; nor am I sure, on consideration, whether Mr. Cowper borrowed his ideas from something written by a friend of his own, or whether that friend and he might not have

happened to coincide in the same original subject. What I allude to, is the picture of a pious Paysanne in his poem entitled " Truth :"

" Yon cottager, who weaves at her own door,  
Pillows and bobbins all her little store,  
Content, though mean, and cheerful, if not gay,  
Shuffling her threads about the live-long day,  
Just earns a scanty pittance, and at night  
Lies down secure, her heart and pocket light ;  
She for her humble sphere by nature fit,  
Has little understanding, and no wit ;  
Receives no praise ; but though her lot be such  
(Toilsome and indigent), she renders much ;  
Just knows, and knows no more, her Bible true—  
A truth the brilliant Frenchman never knew—  
And in that charter reads with sparkling eyes  
Her title to a treasure in the skies :  
Oh, happy peasant ! oh, unhappy bard !  
His the mere tinsel, hers the rich reward :  
He praised, perhaps, for ages yet to come ;  
She never heard of half a mile from home :  
He, lost in errors, his vain heart prefers ;  
She, safe in the simplicity of hers."

In a letter of the Rev. Mr. Newton's (Mr. Cowper's most intimate friend), written while he was curate of Olney, where Mr. Cowper resided for so many years, I find the following passage :

" I know no better corroborating evidence for the relief of the mind, when assaulted by those subtle arguments with which some men reputed wise attack the foundations of our faith, than the testimony of dying persons, especially such as have been out of the noise of controversy, and who,

perhaps, never heard a syllable of what has been stated in these evil days against some of the important articles of the Christian Religion.

“ Permit me to relate, on this occasion, some things which struck me in the conversation of a young woman I visited in her last illness about two years ago. She was a sober, prudent person, could read her Bible, but had read little beside; her knowledge of the world was nearly confined to the parish, for I suppose she was seldom, if ever, twelve miles from home in her life. A few days before her death, in prayer by her bedside, I thanked the Lord, that he gave her now to see, that she ‘ had not followed cunningly devised fables.’ When I had finished, she repeated that expression, ‘ No,’ said she, ‘ not cunningly devised fables; these are realities indeed; I feel their truth, I feel their comfort.’ She then fixed her eyes steadfastly upon me, and said, ‘ Sir, I have often heard you with pleasure; but, give me leave to tell you, that till you come into my situation, and have death and eternity full in your view, it will be impossible for you to conceive the vast weight and importance of the truths you declare.’ ”

Now, when it is considered that every individual, especially of a religious character, known to Mr. Newton at Olney, must have been known also to Mr. Cowper, can it be doubted that the pious female here described was the actual subject of the above lines? I should conclude, too, from the striking sameness, both of sentiment and expression, that this very letter was in Mr. Cowper’s thoughts; only a description of the humble and



pious life which had gone before suited his purpose better, as furnishing a stronger contrast of outward circumstances than the scene described by his friend; a death-bed being, in most external matters, little less a leveller than death itself.

I am led, by this last quotation, to a subject which I have often thought on,—the peculiar character of Mr. Cowper's religious sentiments; and the effects which those sentiments may be supposed to have had on his poetic attainments. Such an inquiry presents itself the more pressingly, because the piety of Mr. Cowper has transfused itself so largely through almost all his compositions.

Mr. Cowper's religious views embraced two sets of principles, the Calvinistical and the Methodistical. I thus distinguish them, because, although modern Calvinists are generally Methodists, there are many Methodists who are not Calvinists.

As a Calvinist, Mr. Cowper held the doctrine of unconditional and irresistible grace. As a Methodist, he held that the effectual influences of Divine grace, whether in enlightening, strengthening, or comforting, are so superior to every thing which the mind could excite in itself, or external circumstances produce in it, as to satisfy the possessor that the operation is divine.

The former of those opinions, I take to have had an unhappy influence on Mr. Cowper's poetic exercises, and, perhaps, a still more unhappy one on his mind. In his writings, it has produced a contracted rigidity, and an almost uncharitable harshness. It seems to have led him to form a severe judgment of all who had not come up to

his standard, not only of sincere piety, but of sound doctrine; and the consequence was natural; for, believing that God works irresistibly in all that are truly good, there could be nothing (in his opinion) to prevent the completeness of the work, if it was really divine; and that, therefore, where it is evidently incomplete in any of the greater features, it is not merely imperfect in degree, but substantially spurious, not even having the remotest tendency to salvation.

Instances of this severity of judgment too often shew themselves; but the most striking are those in the poem entitled "Truth." For example, the descriptions of the Indian Bramin, the Roman Catholic hermit, and above all, that of the church-frequenting old maid. I have never read without regret the following strange lines:

"Such are the fruits of sanctimonious pride,  
Of malice fed, while flesh is mortified.  
Take, madam, the reward of all your prayers,  
Where hermits and where Bramins meet with theirs.  
Your portion is with them; nay, never frown;  
Or, if you please, some fathoms lower down."

How wonderful that the kind-hearted Cowper could speak with such cruel mockery concerning a case, which, if it actually were as he supposed, ought to have filled him with commiseration!

To Mr. Cowper's methodistical principles, considered distinctly from his Calvinism, I am led to attribute a very different influence. It is not my present business to decide whether they were or were not theologically just; but I cannot help

thinking, that the belief of a Divine influence on the minds of good men, and much more the possession of such devotional feelings as seemed to imply such an influence, could not but be highly favourable to poetic exercises.

That such a view of religion is most peculiarly congenial with poetry, appears clearly from this fact, that all poets, heathen as well as Jewish and Christian, have, on this subject, talked nearly the same language. "*Poscit opem chorus et præsentia numina sentit,*" said Horace; "But when the sense of sacred presence fires," says Doctor Johnson, almost in the identical words. It really would seem that there was a kind of necessity of nature for a poet to represent devotion, as implying something of a Divine afflatus, and that it could not otherwise be represented, consistently with the spirit of poetry. No modern Methodist could describe his views of mental intercourse with the Deity in stronger expressions than Pope uses, in describing the pious raptures of "the spotless vestal:" but even these are not much beyond what Addison, in sober earnestness, has given us of his own actual feelings.

"Confusion dwelt on every face,  
And fear in every heart,  
When waves on waves, and gulfs on gulfs  
O'ercame the pilot's art.  
But then, from all my griefs and fears  
Thy mercy set me free,  
When, in the confidence of prayer,  
My soul took hold on thee."

Spencer's two poems of "Heavenly Love" and



“Heavenly Beauty,” take up precisely the same view, using the very language, which, if delivered in modern prose, would be set down as pure fanaticism. For example, the following description of the influences of the Divine sapience on the favoured mind (the thoughts are evidently borrowed from Solomon’s sublime personification of wisdom, in the 8th chapter of Proverbs). After describing the heavenly riches poured by wisdom on the soul that receives her, he proceeds,—

“None thereof worthy be, but those whom she  
Vouchsafeth to her presence to receive,  
And letteth them her lovely face to see;  
Whereof such wondrous pleasures they conceive,  
And sweet contentment, that it doth bereave  
Their soul of sense, through infinite delight,  
And them transport from flesh into the spright;  
In which they see such admirable things  
As carries them into an ecstasy;  
And hear such heavenly notes and carollings  
Of God’s high praise, that fills the brazen sky;  
And feel such joy and pleasure inwardly,  
That maketh them all worldly cares forget,  
And only think on that before them set.”

But instances of this nature would be endless. Every poet that has written with any true fire on religious subjects, would furnish them. I shall, therefore, only add one more illustration of the congeniality between poetry and that which is called methodistical piety. I cannot help thinking it one of the most curious in the whole records of the intellectual world. It is extracted from Sir William Jones’s discourse to the Calcutta academy,

on the Persians. Speaking of a sect which has existed immemorially amongst the Persians, the Hindoos, and even the learned Mussulmans, he tells us, that one of their fundamental tenets is, that "the human soul is an emanation from the Divine essence; and though divided for a time from its heavenly source, will be finally reunited with it; that the highest possible happiness will arise from its reunion; and that the chief good of mankind in this lower world consists in as perfect a union with the Eternal Spirit as the encumbrances of a mortal frame will allow." Such, he tells us, "is the religion of the modern Persian poets, especially the sweet Hafiz and the great Maulavi. Such is the system of the *vedanti* philosophers and best lyric poets of India."

Now, if such be the notion of religion which poetry uniformly cherishes, can we conceive any thing more fitted to carry poetry to its highest pitch of Divine enthusiasm, than for the poet to have this very idea so practically realised in his own bosom, as to be himself persuaded that he possesses and habitually enjoys those very influences of the Parent of Good? That the view of those high privileges of favoured minds charms, even in speculation, appears from an infinitude of such specimens as those I have quoted; in which, almost constantly, the verse catches a new vigour from the subject. What, then, must be the influence upon poetic exercises, when this highest exciter of the imagination is the fixed habit of the mind? When the poet is not only morally "pure in heart," but actually seems to himself already to have a portion

of the promised reward—a mental sight and sense of God.

It is remarkable, that there are but two only of our classical poets, viz. Milton and Cowper, by whom we can be sure that this elevated view of devotion was cordially embraced and practically pursued; and it is particularly interesting that those two should resemble each other in so many poetic excellences, by all others unattained. That the methodistical tenets of Cowper were, in substance, held also by his great master, might be demonstrated, not merely from the “Paradise Lost,” but even from his earliest work of consequence, the “Masque of Comus.” What Mr. Warton every now and then remarks upon as Platonism, was neither more nor less than Milton’s view of Christianity, as Mr. Todd, the late editor, has once or twice modestly but spiritedly intimated. That Milton studied and loved the Platonic philosophy is most certain, but it was because he found in the Grecian sage that sublime view of man’s chief good, which has been already mentioned as immemorially preserved in the East, and which he conceived he saw also (only with infinitely greater clearness) in the Sacred Scriptures. But a single passage, already quoted by Mr. Hayley, will prove at once, that, on the subject of Divine influences, Milton both thought and felt in that very manner, which in Mr. Cowper has been accounted methodistical. Speaking of the qualifications necessary in order to that noblest kind of poetry, which has the purifying and exalting of the human mind for its object, he uses these remarkable words: “These



abilities, wherever they are found, are the inspired gift of God, &c. The accomplishment of those intentions, it lies not but in a power above man's to promise, nor to be obtained by the invocation of Dame Memory and her siren daughters, but by devout prayer to that Eternal Spirit, who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and sends out his seraphim with the hallowed fire of his altar, to touch and purify the lips of whom he pleases." Bishop Newton and Mr. Hayley have both agreed in calling Milton a religious enthusiast. In doing so, they confirm my position of a resemblance in religious sentiments between him and Cowper, because such a charge can only be founded on those views of religion which were common to them both. I dare say, for instance, that this very passage,\* in which Milton so seriously and solemnly grounds his hope of poetic excellence on a heavenly influence, would be considered as an evidence in point. Whether such a sentiment was really and strictly enthusiastical, I shall not now inquire; but this, I think, is very obvious, that, of all possible views or feelings, it was the most favourable to that very object at which he aimed. *Possunt quia posse videntur*, is just as true with respect to internal as to external exertion. A want of confidence in a man's own powers relaxes the nerve of his mind, and, of course, destroys the effect (at least comparatively) of the best talents. But Milton's feeling was far above the justest confidence in himself. It was an

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\* Bishop Newton quotes this very passage, to warrant his charge.

infinitely more sublimating principle; "into the heaven of heavens it presumed;" giving its happy possessor a prælibation of the "pleasures which are at God's right hand," and, of course, raising him to an habitual ecstasy, which made him speak as never mere man spoke. Instead, therefore, of ranking him with earthly bards, even those of the boldest flight, I could almost regard him as not wholly disappointed of his daring hope, as catching something of the flame which he invoked, and as assimilated to that Isaiah, whose vision of Jehovah and his seraphim he seems almost to have realised.

It is remarkable, that Cowper has expressed nearly a similar sentiment; with this difference, however, that what bursts from Milton in bright effulgence, like the glory of the meridian sun, diffuses itself with a milder radiance in Cowper: the latter, of course, surprises less, but the view is more distinct, and better fitted to the ken of mere mortals. It is, as Addison says of the evening landscape, "more finely shaded, and disposed among softer lights."

"But tho' life's valley be a vale of tears,  
A brighter scene beyond that vale appears,  
Whose glory with a light which never fades,  
Shoots between scatter'd rocks and opening shades;  
And while it shews the land the soul desires,  
The language of the land she seeks, inspires.  
Thus touch'd; the tongue receives a sacred cure  
Of all that was absurd, profane, impure;  
Held within modest bounds, the tide of speech  
Pursues the course that truth and nature teach;

No longer labours merely to produce  
 The pomp of sound, or tinkle without use ;  
 Where'er it winds, the salutary stream,  
 Sprightly and fresh, enriches every theme ;  
 While all the happy man possess'd before,  
 The gift of nature or the classic store,  
 Is made subservient to the grand design  
 For which Heaven formed the faculty divine."

It is, perhaps, not sufficiently considered that picturesque description, and even the grandest and most beautiful imagery constitute but the body of poetry, of which moral sentiment alone is the soul. This is really the amount of Horace's invaluable precept (whether he himself was fully aware of it or not).

" Nec satis est pulchra esse poemata, dulcia sunt."

The pathetic, which he instances immediately after, giving pleasure chiefly, as it excites moral feelings. To produce its effect, he tells us, it must be real, and not fictitious.

" Si vis me flere, dolendum est  
 Primum ipsi tibi, tunc tua me infortunia lædent."

It follows that, in every instance as well as this, the deeper the moral feelings of the author have been, the more powerfully will he raise the delights of moral sentiment in his readers. Of this, Horace himself is a remarkable example. His feelings were as much diversified as those perhaps of any man that ever lived ; and he has, consequently, written in all varieties of poetry, from the lightest and the most trivial to the most deeply serious and



the most sublimely moral, that a heathen poet could be capable of. Of all these, which are the greatest favourites with readers in general? I apprehend it would be found that, if the suffrages were collected, the serious and moral parts of his writings would carry it hollow. What odes, for instance, are most readily recollected? Is it not the *Eheu fugaces*, the *Quis desiderio*, the *Integer vitæ*, the *Justum et tenacem*, the *Descende cælo*, the *Otium divos*, and others of a like character? The last-mentioned, in particular, has been oftener translated than any other piece of classic antiquity; and evidently for this reason, because, in a most peculiar manner, it comes home to every man's bosom, by exquisitely describing and illustrating that restless and incessant panting after some fuller happiness, which all mortals experience, and which has been justly regarded as the inward pledge of immortality.

The author of the "Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope" has observed, respecting the moral passages in Dyer's "Grongar Hill," that "the unexpected insertion of such reflections imparts to us the same pleasure that we feel when, in wandering through a wilderness or grove, we suddenly behold, in the turning of the walk, a statue of some virtue or muse." The remark is, doubtless, both just and elegant; but I should be inclined to attribute a still greater portion of the pleasure to that mellow and harmonious depth of colouring which such reflections can alone give to a poem, and of which, perhaps, this poem in particular furnishes one of the finest examples. The moral sentiments are not only the happiest heighteners

of the gayer scenery; (so that it may be said in Dyer's own beautiful words, that

“ Each gives each a double charm,  
Like pearls upon an Æthiop's arm”)

but from their peculiar justness, and their exquisite congeniality with the natural feelings of man, they excite a distinct and even more sublime delight, something like that caused by a finely conceived bass in music, which, while it produces the most perfect harmony in the piece, seems also to possess an independent and peculiarly majestic melody of its own.

I am ready to believe, that if those pieces of English poetry which have been the greatest favourites with the public, were to be examined, it would be found that their popularity has been generally in a near proportion to the degree in which they have been animated with vivid and unaffected moral sentiment. It is this, I conceive, which has chiefly recommended the “Seasons” of Thomson, and has endeared the “Deserted Village” and the “Traveller” of Goldsmith to so many various classes of readers. Akenside would, probably, have excited a similar interest, if he had been as simple as he was ingenious: and Prior would, doubtless, stand much higher in estimation, notwithstanding Dr. Johnson's unwarrantable severity, if he had not degraded the native nobleness of his graver thoughts by so strange an association with disgusting ribaldry. In Doctor Johnson's own imitations of Juvenal there is a peculiar vein of moral sentiment, particularly in his “Vanity of

Human Wishes," the conclusion of which may be set down as one of the finest displays of a great and good mind that could any where be met with, and which, I should imagine, is seldom read without emotion. The truth is, that virtue is that from which the human heart is fitted by its Author to receive its most sublime delights; and, therefore, when this most congenial principle embodies itself in genuine poetry, it acts with an energy which none but callous and insensible minds can resist. Even the slave of vice is taken ere he is aware, and cannot help loving his captivity. He feels a strange pleasure, to which, if he could hope to retain it, he would instantly sacrifice all his most valued gratifications.

With Milton's "Comus," (in that exquisite soliloquy, which, perhaps, itself furnishes as divine a specimen of what I have been attempting to describe as is to be found in human poetry,) he would be sensible that

"These in pleasing slumber lull'd the sense,  
And in sweet madness robb'd it of itself;  
But such a sacred and home-felt delight,  
Such sober certainty of waking bliss  
He never felt till now."

"Poetices finis," says the excellent Lowth, "est prodesse delectando. Concitatio autem affectuum, per imitationem facta, est summe et utilis et jucunda. Utilis est in primis hujusmodi concitatio affectuum si recte legitimeque fiat; nimirum si ita moveantur affectus ut ad suum finem dirigantur, ut naturæ consilium et rerum veritatem servant, hoc



est, si excitetur mali aversatio boni amor. Affectiones enim principia sunt atque elementa humanarum actionum, omnes in se sunt bonæ, utiles, honestæ, et cum debite exercentur, non modo recta ducunt, sed stimulant etiam et incendunt ad virtutem. Poeticæ partes sunt, eas incitare, dirigere, moderari. Affectuum exercitationem emendationem disciplinam profitetur; id quod Aristoteles per *πάθημάτων κάθαρσιν* unice intelligere videtur.—  
*De Sacrá Poesi Præl.* xvii.

But the worst of it is, that these noblest benefits and delights of poetry can be but rarely produced, because all the requisites for producing them so very seldom meet. A vivid mind and happy imitative power may enable a poet to form glowing pictures of virtue, and almost produce in himself a short-lived enthusiasm of goodness; but though even these transient and factitious movements of mind may serve to produce grand and delightful effusions of poetry, yet when the best of these are compared with the equally poetic productions of a genuine lover of virtue, a discerning judgment will scarcely fail to mark the difference. A simplicity of conception and expression; a conscious, and therefore unaffected dignity; an instinctive adherence to sober reason, even amid the highest flights; a uniform justness and consistency of thought; a glowing yet temperate ardour of feeling; a peculiar felicity both in the choice and combination of terms, by which even the plainest words acquire the truest character of eloquence, and which is rarely found except where a subject is not only intimately known, but cordially loved;

these, I conceive, are the features peculiar to the real votary of virtue, and which must, of course, give to his strains a perfection of effect, never to be attained by the poet of inferior moral endowments. I believe it will be readily granted, that all these qualities were never more perfectly combined than in the poetry of Milton; and I think, too, there will be little doubt that the next to him in every one of these instances, beyond all comparison, is Cowper. The genius of the latter did certainly not lead him to emulate the songs of the seraphim; but, though he pursues a lower walk of poetry than his great master, he appears no less the enraptured votary of pure un-mixed goodness. Nay, perhaps he may, in this one respect, possess some peculiar excellences, which make him even more the bard of Christianity. That divine religion infinitely exalts, but it also deeply humbles the mind which it inspires. It gives majesty to the thoughts, but it impresses meekness on the manners, and diffuses tenderness through the feelings. It combines sensibility with fortitude, the lowliness of the child with the magnanimity of the hero.

The grander features of the Christian character were never more gloriously exemplified than in that spirit which animates the whole of Milton's poetry. His own "Michael" does not impress us with the idea of a purer or more awful virtue than that which we feel in every portion of his majestic verse; and he no less happily indicates the source from which his excellence was derived, by the bright beams which he ever and anon reflects

upon us from the Sacred Scriptures. But the milder graces of the Gospel are certainly less apparent. What we behold is too awful to be entirely amiable, and it might almost have inspired a wish that a spirit equally pure and heavenly might be raised to illustrate, with like felicity, the more attractive and gentler influences of our Divine religion.

In Cowper, above any poet that ever lived, would such a wish seem to be fulfilled. In his charming effusions, we have the same spotless purity, the same elevated devotion, the same superiority to all earthly passions, the same vital exercise of every noble and exalted quality of the mind, and the same devotedness to the Sacred Scriptures and to the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel. The difference is, that instead of an almost repressive dignity, we have the sweetest familiarity; instead of the majestic grandeur of the Old Testament, we have the winning graces of the New; instead of those thunders by which angels were discomfited, we have, as it were, the "still small voice" of Him who was meek and lowly of heart. May we not then venture to assert, that from that spirit of devoted piety which has rendered both these great men liable to the charge of religious enthusiasm, but which in truth raised the minds of both to a kind of happy residence,

" In regions mild of calm and serene air,  
Above the smoke and stir of this dim spot,  
Which men call earth ;"

a peculiar character has been derived to the poetry of both, which distinguishes their com-



positions from those of almost all the world besides? I have already enumerated some of the superior advantages of a truly virtuous poet, and presumed to state that these are realised in an unexampled degree in Milton and Cowper: that they both owed this moral eminence to their vivid sense of religion, will, I conceive, need little other demonstration than that which will arise to every reader of taste and feeling on examining their works. It will here, I think, be seen at once, that that sublimity of conception, that delicacy of virtuous feeling, that majestic independence of mind, that quick relish for all the beauties of nature at once so pure and so exquisite, which we find ever occurring in them both, could not have existed in the same unrivalled degree if their devotion had been less intense, and of course their minds more dissipated amongst low and distracting objects. Nothing so much fixes a man's character, and gives direction and tone to all his faculties, as the view he has of happiness; this is every one's ultimate object; and as this is high or low, pure or impure, earthly or heavenly, so unquestionably will be the whole texture of life, the whole turn of the mind, the whole form and colour of the thoughts and conceptions. I have already stated the supposed enthusiasm of both Milton and Cowper to have consisted in this—that “they conceived the influences of the Divine Spirit in illuminating, strengthening, and comforting the minds of good men, to be so superior to every thing which mere ratiocination could effect, or external circumstances produce, as to satisfy those who have such

feelings, of the divinity of the agency." Now, nothing can be plainer than that, let this persuasion be just or erroneous, it implies the highest kind of inward happiness. I do not merely mean as arising from the supposition itself, but as involved in the necessary grounds of such a supposition, especially in such men as Milton and Cowper. What must have been their views and feelings respecting religious objects, when, great as their powers of mind were, they deemed those powers inadequate to the production of what they experienced, and therefore resolved it into the influence of Almighty goodness operating on their souls? How clear must have been their mental view of God and his attributes, how steady their choice of virtue and holiness, how high their hope of future, and how pure their feeling of present, felicity! But what an influence must such a ruling sentiment have had on all their subordinate habits and distinct mental exercises! We know how much depends in these, on the depression or cheerfulness of the animal spirits, how the conceptions become dull or lively, luminous or obscure, feeble or energetic, as our barometrical minds rise or fall. What mental quality, then, could we conceive so favourable to poetic excellence, as that very persuasion, taken in connexion with its adjuncts, which has been called enthusiasm in Milton, and methodism in Cowper? From what other source could equal alacrity of mind, equal superiority to earthly clogs, equal relish for every thing pure and exalted, equal flow and energy of conception and expression, have possibly been derived?

For, let it be well observed, that whether the enthusiasm of these two great poets was founded in truth or in fancy, it was not of the vulgar sort; it implied no new revelation, no inward impulsive guidance\*. Bishop Newton, while he charges Milton with being an enthusiast, attests his perfect orthodoxy, both by his own suffrages, and that of the rigid Dr. Trapp; and Cowper no less evidently appears, from all his works, to have been an unvarying consistent disciple of the Genevan theologians, or the English puritans. Had either of them pretended to private revelations, this could not have been the case, nor would they have been so singularly attached to the written word of God, (a contempt of which is almost uniformly the concomitant of gross fanaticism). If, then, they were enthusiasts, it was respecting the moral energies of the Spirit of God only. It was purification from every thing earthly, animal, devilish, that they looked for. It was not a vision of heaven, or an intercourse with angels, which either of them invoked; but it was what our own Church teaches us all to pray for—"a cleansing of the thoughts of the heart, by the inspiration of God's holy Spirit." The only difference, therefore, between them and the generality of professing Christians, was, that what most others are satisfied merely to pray for, they had either the real or imaginary happiness of thinking they had attained.

These last observations, I conceive, are justified

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\* I speak not here of what poor Cowper's insanity might have led to; but of what appears throughout his writings.



by the two passages quoted above, from Milton and from Cowper, in both of which the grand object is purity. It is for the attainment of this grace that Milton addresses the sender-forth of the seraphim, and it is to this that Cowper ascribes the happiest improvements in utterance. But the pure morality of Milton's supposed enthusiasm is so nobly evinced by his own matchless view of happiness in the last address of the archangel to Adam, that I cannot better illustrate all I have been saying, either of the nature of Milton's piety, or of its influence on the views and powers of his mind, than by referring to it:—

“ This having learned, thou hast attain'd the sum  
Of wisdom ; hope no higher, though all the stars  
Thou knew'st by name, and all th' ethereal powers,  
All secrets of the deep, all nature's works,  
Or works of God, in heav'n, air, earth, or sea,  
And all the riches of the world enjoy'dst,  
And all the rule, one empire : only add  
Deeds to thy knowledge answerable ; add faith,  
Add virtue, patience, temperance ; add love,  
By name to come, call'd charity, the soul  
Of all the rest : then wilt thou not be loath  
To leave this paradise, but shalt possess  
A paradise within thee, happier far.”

I imagine it would be very difficult to point out a passage in any writer, in which the very soul and spirit of Christian morality has been so completely, or so happily, embodied, as in these incomparable verses. I have already observed, that the effects of Cowper's piety are less magnificently, though more amiably, manifested. But I may add, that they discover more variety, and shew, in a far

greater number of instances, how signally his means of pleasure, and, of course, his powers of pleasing others, were extended and enlarged by his habitual devotion. It is finely observed by the pious and eloquent Porteus, that though Christianity "forbids excess in our pleasures, yet it multiplies the number of them, and disposes the mind to receive entertainment from a variety of objects and pursuits, which to the gay part of mankind are absolutely flat and insipid. To a body," says he, "in perfect health, the plainest food is relishing; and to a soul rightly harmonised by religion, every thing affords delight. Rural retirement, domestic tranquillity, friendly conversation, literary pursuits; nay, even the silent beauties of unadorned nature, a bright day, a still evening, a starry hemisphere, are sources of unadulterated pleasure to those whose taste is not vitiated by criminal indulgences, or debased by trifling ones." (Ser. XIV. Vol. I.) Than those, I am persuaded, never were juster observations; nor do I conceive it possible for them ever to receive a more happy exemplification than in the various compositions of Cowper, but particularly his "Task," "the most trifling pictures" in which, as a periodical writer some years since remarked, "are so many new proofs, that to a well-formed and uncorrupted mind, the sources of innocent amusement are inexhaustible."

And let it be remembered, that whatever quickens the poet's delight in contemplating objects, must proportionately increase his liveliness in describing them. "Apt words," says the same periodical writer, "follow just conceptions."

Verbaque provisam rem non invita sequuntur.

“Cowper’s verse,” he adds, “might no doubt frequently admit of improvement; his expressions scarcely ever. His fancy softly ductile, yet strongly tenacious, receives and keeps the vivid impress of each object; and the cast, from so fair a mould, must, of course, present every feature and lineament with the ease of nature, and the accuracy of truth.” The fact is, that as nothing so weakens all the powers of the mind, and so blunts all the pure and innocent tastes, as the dominion of that which the Scripture calls the *Φρόνημα σαρκος*; so nothing reinstates and reinvigorates such tastes and powers, like that which is appositely denominated the *Φρόνημα πνεύματος*. To this predominance of pure religion in the heart (for such is evidently the meaning of the expression), no higher influences can be ascribed, than by saying that it is *Ζωή και Ειρήνη*; that is, every thing that is animated and powerful, combined with every thing that is tranquil and happy. Is not this the very picture which Cowper’s poetry gives us of his mind, even though in conflict with constitutional melancholy? Is it not himself that he gives us the idea of, when he says,

“The innocent are gay, the lark is gay,  
That dries its feathers, saturate with dew,  
Beneath the rosy cloud, while yet the beams  
Of day-spring shoot across his humble nest?”

It may, after all, be asked, was it necessary that Cowper’s piety should have been methodistical to answer these purposes? Might not every practical



and every poetic end have been equally served by a more rational religion ? Without entering within the precincts of polemics, I would simply recur for answer to a former observation, that that view of religion, which engages most by the prospect or the feeling of high inward happiness, must ever produce the most powerful effects in the man, and still more in the poet. Now, this certainly is one striking quality in Methodism, wherever else it may be erroneous. It assumes for its leading principle, that religion is both the infallible and the exclusive way to happiness. The modern rationalist, on the contrary, considers religion as little more than a mere guide of moral conduct. It, therefore, is only consulted where the business is serious, or at those stated periods of his time which he has formerly allotted to it. With his pleasures it has little concern, except, at most, to restrain their excesses. Religion, of course, occupies, as it were, but one apartment in the mind of the Rationalist. Perhaps, occasionally, it resides in his reason, *i. e.* he sometimes thinks of it with soberness ; but its stated residence is in his conscience, where it has only to do with questions of duty : into his affections it seldom enters, and as rarely into his imagination. He scarcely perceives how it can be connected with either ; and he even dreads such a connexion, as approaching to that fanaticism which he so much dislikes in the Methodist. Such, as far as I have been able to judge, is the extent of what is, at this day, deemed rational religion ; and I think it must at least be allowed, that it is not the religion of the poet.

Perhaps, they who know human nature will hardly think that it is fitted for the exigencies of common life, except where there is a predisposition to unimpassioned regularity. The necessity of a more ardent religion for minds of a higher character, so as to furnish an adequate object for the affections and the imagination, as well as for the reason and conscience, is, in my mind, sufficient to account for Cowper's becoming a Methodist. At a period of peculiar sensibility, he fell in with some connexions of his own, who, though possessed of questionable opinions, were sincerely and ardently devout; and, in the exalted happiness which he thought he saw in them, he felt an attraction operating on his own heart, which he was not desirous, and, perhaps, in a sense, not able, to resist. Sentiment, therefore, of the strongest and most insinuating kind, made Cowper a Methodist.

His view seems to me to have been precisely that of the eloquent Saurin. "Heureux le fidèle, qui, dans les combats que lui livrent les ennemis de son salut, peut opposer plaisirs à plaisirs, délices à délices; les plaisirs de la prière et de la méditation aux plaisirs du monde; les délices du silence et de la retraite à celles des cercles, des dissipations, des spectacles. Un tel homme est ferme dans ses devoirs, même parce qu'il est homme, et qu'il ne dépend pas d'un homme de ne pas aimer ce qui lui ouvre des sources de joye; un tel homme ne peut jamais succomber entièrement sous les tentations, parce que, selon l'énergique expression d'un apôtre, 'La paix de Dieu, qui est au dessus de tout entendement, garde:' c'est-à-dire, preserve les sens, et

empêche, par les delectations dont elle l'inonde, qu'ils ne l'entraînent dans le crime." The only difference was, that Cowper needed balm for a wounded spirit, rather than support against dangerous attractions; but the matter of aid was one and the same: and it seems, that for about seven years after the first enkindling of this elevated devotion, even his constitutional malady was overborne by the unabating spring-tide of his happiness. The delights of this period lived ever after in his memory, his imagination, and his heart, even when his hopes of his own future happiness became so unhappily shaken by his melancholy. To this affection, perhaps, we owe it, that he made poetry his occupation, and it seems as if this exercise had the power of suspending his complaints, of scattering, for the time, the clouds which enveloped him, and of restoring to him, at least transiently, the sunshine of the breast. But even from these gleams a light has streamed forth upon his verse, which makes the common objects of earth appear to us, in his description, as if they were already illumined with the dawn of an eternal day. How much they so appeared to himself, none but his own delightful expressions can give an idea. To them, therefore, I finally appeal, in support of the substance of the above observations:—

“ Acquaint thyself with God, if thou would'st taste  
His works. Admitted once to his embrace,  
Thou shalt perceive that thou wast blind before;  
Thine eye shall be instructed: and thine heart,  
Made pure, shall relish with divine delight,  
Till then unfelt, what hands divine have wrought.



The soul that sees him, or receives, sublim'd,  
 New faculties, or learns, at least, t' employ  
 More worthily the pow'rs she own'd before :  
 Discerns in all things—what with stupid gaze  
 Of ignorance till then she overlook'd —  
 A ray of heavenly light gilding all forms  
 Terrestrial, in the vast and the minute,  
 Th' unambiguous footsteps of a God,  
 Who gives its lustre to th' insect's wing,  
 And wheels his throne upon the rolling worlds.  
 Much conversant with heav'n, she often holds,  
 With those fair ministers of light to man  
 That fill the skies nightly with silent pomp,  
 Sweet conference. Inquires what strains were they  
 With which heav'n rang, when ev'ry star, in haste  
 To gratulate the new created earth,  
 Sent forth a voice, and all the sons of God  
 Shouted for joy. Tell me, ye shining hosts,  
 That navigate a sea that knows no storms,  
 Beneath a vault unsullied with a cloud,  
 If, from your elevation whence ye view  
 Distinctly scenes invisible to man,  
 And systems of whose birth no tidings yet  
 Have reached this nether world, ye spy a race  
 Favour'd as ours, transgressors from the womb,  
 And hasting to a grave, yet doom'd to rise,  
 And to possess a brighter heav'n than yours ?  
 As one who long detain'd in foreign shores  
 Pants to return,—and when he sees afar  
 His country's weather-bleached and batter'd rocks  
 From the green wave emerging, darts an eye,  
 Radiant with joy, toward the happy land,—  
 So I, with animated hopes, behold,  
 And many an aching wish, your beamy fires,  
 That shew like beacons in the blue abyss,  
 Ordain'd to guide th' embodied spirit home  
 From toilsome life to never-ending rest.

Love kindles as I gaze. I feel desires  
That give assurance of their own success,  
And that infus'd from heav'n must thither tend.

See, my dear sir, I began on the 19th of January, as you have perceived, to write a letter, and on this 11th of April I finish an essay. I only fear it may combine some of the worst qualities of both, without having the requisites of either. On various grounds it might need an apology, but that would not mend it. I can only say, that I submit it to you for transmission to your friend, or not, as you judge best; and if transmitted, I commit it to him, to use it or overlook it as he thinks proper. It is, probably, too late to be of use to him; and perhaps it pursues so peculiar a path, as to be entirely wide of all he could wish to tell the public. It claims no merit but having been suggested by an unfettered love of truth, and by veneration for a singular example of excellence, moral and intellectual.

I am, dear Sir,

Your faithful Servant,

ALEXANDER KNOX.

## REFLECTIONS ON 2 TIMOTHY, III. 15.

“ And that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”

ST. PAUL had been just before predicting the evils which were likely to arise to the Church from the multiplying of false teachers; and being deeply impressed with the dangers to which Christians would be exposed from the contagion of their doctrine and example, he exhorts his beloved Timothy to be vigilantly on his guard. But he conveys his advice rather by stating facts than by direct admonition. He reminds Timothy of the benefit he might derive from having had so near a view of St. Paul's own doctrine and conduct, but he lays a still deeper stress on the advantages of his early education, it being from this that he infers his capacity of profiting by St. Paul's example. “ Evil men and seducers,” says he, “ shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But continue thou in the things thou hast learned and been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them, and that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”



The observation itself is a most noble testimony to the efficacy of the Scriptures; but the terms used by the apostle carry it to its highest pitch. Language could not express more than is contained in these few words: "which are able to make thee wise unto salvation."

Wisdom has been so much the object of a universal passion, that from the first workings of the human mind it has been every where either aimed at, or pretended to. The most ancient of the sacred poets, the most distinguished of the Jewish kings, and the most enlightened of the heathen sages, wonderfully accord in pronouncing upon it almost the same eulogium. "It cannot be gotten for gold," says Job, "neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof: no mention shall be made of coral or of pearls, for the price of wisdom is above rubies." "I Wisdom," says Solomon, "dwell with Prudence, and find out knowledge of witty inventions. Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom: I am understanding; I have strength. My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold; and my revenue than choice silver. I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment." And, says Cicero, "Wisdom is the mother of all good arts, therefore nothing more profitable, nothing more delightful, nothing more excellent than the love of wisdom has been conferred on man by the immortal gods."—*De Legibus*, lib. i. *prope finem*.

But when St. Paul wrote to Timothy, the term wisdom had become ambiguous; much was so called which was utterly unworthy of the name.

The natural thirst for wisdom was as keen as ever ; but not being able to find for themselves “ the fountain of living water,” the wise men of the world had hewn out cisterns, broken cisterns, which could hold no water. Of this the learned will find striking instances in the philosophy of the Epicurean, the Academics, the Stoics, and even the followers of Plato.

The Apostle therefore fixes his meaning by declaring what was accomplished by the wisdom of which he spoke : “ The Scriptures,” says he, “ are able to make us wise unto salvation ;” so wise, as to attain perfect security and genuine happiness. And here he falls in with the most natural wishes of man. Salvation being really the instinctive aim, however erroneously pursued, of every child of Adam. Nor does he less accord with all that was true in philosophy : for, to rescue man from the ills of nature ; to heal the maladies of the soul ; to lighten the load of life ; to expel misery and to confer happiness ; in a word, to bring salvation to mankind, was the professed aim of all the pursuers of, or pretenders to, wisdom.

That man needs to be made wise unto salvation, that is, requires to be instructed how to escape the miseries of his nature, and attain tranquillity of mind and self-enjoyment, can need little proof to him who either observes or feels. Human nature has in all ages been represented by poets as well as by philosophers (by those who caught the appearances of things as well as by those who sought to fathom the causes of them), as pregnant with wretchedness. The gayest of the Latin poets

has peculiarly dwelt upon this theme; and who that has any portion of sensibility, does not in his heart respond to his beautiful, yet melancholy strains,

“ Tamen

*Curtæ nescio quid semper abest rei.*”

“ Post equitem sedet atra cura.” “ Patriæ quis exsul, se quoque fugit?” And what Christian divine could more earnestly press the necessity of seeking salvation from this misery?

“ Ut jugulent homines surgunt de nocte latrones,

Ut te ipsum *serves*, non expergisceris?”

Shall we, then, question that wretchedness of human nature which poets and philosophers thus agree to attest? If we doubt, let us judge for ourselves; let us cast our eyes over the extended mass of mankind. Let us observe the brutal ignorance in which so vast a majority helplessly remain, lower in some respects than “ the beasts that perish.” Let us mark the vice and profligacy which pervade not merely this degraded rank, but so much of all ranks. Let us inspect even more respectable characters, and see how much foolish desire, unbridled passion, rankling envy, gloomy discontent, appear even on the surface of life: whether, therefore, we view men as individuals or as social beings, whom can we pronounce happy, while we cannot but see thousands and tens of thousands who are, from some one or other of these causes, undeniably miserable?

Can any earthly good furnish a remedy for these evils? On the contrary, do they not most



But, even where these miseries are not felt, there is still the dread of death, by which most are, in some degree or other, "through all their life subject to bondage." "O death! how bitter art thou," says an apocryphal writer, "to the man that is at ease in his possessions!" "Caret mortis formidine virtus," says Horace; and Virgil,

Atque metus omnes et inexorabile fatum.

Subjecit pedibus, strepitumque Acherontis avari."

What, then, is human nature, if left without a remedy; if there be no such charitable dole as Burke speaks of to be found? It was this, as I have observed, that the philosophers professed to pursue; and Horace seems to have had a strong idea of such a thing when he wrote those lines, *Epist. i. lib. i., "Sic mihi tarda fluunt,"* &c. But he was, after all, but a disappointed alchymist; though, as if touching the very moment of projection. St. Paul, and they who bore the same commission, could alone accomplish what Horace and such as he could only aim at. And this is precisely what the Apostle professes to do. He declares the existence of an adequate and efficacious remedy for all those evils, when he says "that the Holy Scriptures are able to make one wise unto salvation." Salvation, in St. Paul's sense, has a plenary reference to every one of the evils we have mentioned; and, therefore, what he means to assert, is, that there is no calamity, no weakness, no fear, no misery, to which the heart of man is liable, from the sting and distressing feeling of which he may not be effectually delivered, by fully and cordially receiving that wisdom which is promulgated in the Holy Scriptures.

Let us examine for ourselves this assertion, and consider whether the Bible, indeed, merits this high encomium. Infidels in our day have ransacked it, for supposed contradictions and absurdities. Let us who possess that holy religion which the word of God alone has discovered, do as much for God's honour, and our own and our neighbour's happiness.

Philosophy was insufficient for the producing

of virtue, and, of course, for the security of happiness, because it had in it no principle strong enough to become a power paramount in the human mind. Its highest motive to virtue was self-esteem. But the soul must be elevated to a high degree of virtue before it can feel the force of this motive. This is, therefore, much more the reward of true virtue than a motive to it. It can have little effect in correcting minds which are under the power of wrong habits, since it requires, in order to its very existence, that delicacy of mental taste which they are yet destitute of; yet, beyond this principle, philosophy could not proceed. It was, consequently, little more than a pleasant theory, which ingenious minds loved to talk of, which naturally good minds of themselves, in part at least, accorded with, but which could accomplish little or nothing in these instances.

Where the aid of moral principle was most requisite, it requires little attention to detect the obvious deficiency of philosophy, as a radical principle of moral goodness. Such a principle, to be adequate to its use, must at once be so simple as to be within the grasp of all apprehensions, and yet so universal as to meet every activity of human intellect or affection. It must be so powerful as to control even the strongest human passions, and, at the same time, so benignantly influential as to furnish support and comfort under the sharpest pains, and the most distressing disappointments. Less than all this, it is evident, would not answer the exigences of human nature, would not make a man wise unto salvation. And yet not one of these



qualities was found in any of the philosophic schemes of the heathen world. Accordingly, we see that they who followed after wisdom were but vain in their imaginations, and their foolish hearts were darkened; professing themselves to be wise, they, in effect, became fools. Thus Cicero, the most enlightened of his day, sunk almost into despair on the death of his daughter; and Brutus, when disappointed in his political pursuits, renounced virtue as a phantom.

Whence, then, we may ask with the ancient sages, cometh wisdom; and where is the place of understanding? Since man knoweth not the price thereof, neither is it found in the land of the living. Is there no such moral principle as that which we have described, at once simple, universal, irresistibly powerful, and yet graciously attractive? Yes, such precisely and perfectly is the grand principle which the Sacred Scripture, and it alone, manifests to man. The vivid, matter of fact display which it makes to us of one supreme moral Governor of the world; who made us, sustains us, and will judge us; who hates vice, and will punish it; who pities weakness, and will aid it; who loves virtue, and will graciously accept and reward its sincere, though imperfect effects: this is an inexhaustible, ever present source, both of motive, of moral strength, and of consolation, to which nothing can be added, and the force and energy of which cannot be evaded. This, when once established in the heart, cannot fail to be a root of all virtue and excellence, and a direct antidote for all the evils already mentioned as urgent on mortality.

If, then, the fact be, that human nature infinitely needs this view of the Supreme Being, in order both to virtue and happiness; and that this view is nowhere to be found but in the Holy Scriptures, and is there displayed clearly, consistently, and effectually; does it not necessarily follow, that St. Paul is fully warranted in his important assertion; and that, consequently, there is no blessing which the divine bounty has vouchsafed to man, to be for one moment put in the remotest competition with that manifestation of God's nature, attributes, relation to us, and intentions towards us, which is made to us in the Sacred Scriptures?

The view of God's nature, attributes, and will, given in Scripture, is direct and simple. It is what no philosophical search could have reached, for we know it did not. If it might have discovered some of those truths as probabilities, it would certainly have gone no further. But in the Scripture the display is as really open to the plainest, as to the most powerful understanding. He that runneth may read. Let, then, the scriptural view of God be soberly considered, and then let it be said, Is there a vice which the heartfelt reception of this view would not necessarily crush or expel? Is there a passion which it would not restrain or regulate? Is there a virtue which it would not inspire? Is there a mental weakness above which it could not raise us? Is there a valuable hope which it would not excite and maintain, or a degrading fear which it would not banish and dissipate; and, by effecting these grandest moral purposes, is there a feeling of unhappiness which it would not

infallibly, and for ever, exclude? Such, strictly, were the grounds on which St. Paul pronounced his divine eulogium. Were ever grounds more firm, or eulogium more just?

The Holy Scripture is itself nothing else but a display of God, but the lights are astonishingly diversified; the illustrations are so numerous, as to meet every variety of age and nature, of mind and temper. Every attribute of Deity is explained by facts. Every relation between God and man is made infinitely clear, and infinitely interesting. Creative power, providential wisdom, pitying, assisting, and saving goodness, are all set forth with plain simplicity, and yet with the most divine ingenuity. His will concerning us, his intentions towards us, what he has done, is doing, and will do, respecting us; and what we, in our turn, are to do towards him, what we are to fear, to desire, to pray for, to pursue, in order to enjoy his favour here, and his beatific presence hereafter; these are all to be found in this single volume, and all expressed with such a depth of meaning, such pregnancy of fresh reflection and progressive thought, that those who have studied them with closest attention, and with the best qualifications for fathoming depths of knowledge, have repeatedly avowed them to be a mine of wisdom, not only rich, but inexhaustible.

The testimony of heathen philosophers and poets has been already mentioned, as evincing those wants of human nature which the fulness of Christian truth can alone supply; but it may also be adduced, as intimating to us from a kind of instinctive light, those very principles of virtue and happiness which



the Scripture alone teaches us to attain. When the Stoic philosopher, in one of Cicero's Dialogues, had been elaborately arguing in support of the being and providence of the gods, the Epicurean, who took the opposite side, objected, that in this case man would be placed in a dreadful situation, as it set over him a constant and severe observer, from whose eye he could never withdraw himself by day or by night. Doubtless, Cicero meant to make the Epicurean here pay an unconscious compliment to the moral efficacy of the belief of a Deity, since, in proportion as such a superintendence would appear terrible, in the very same degree must it be necessary. To object to its awfulness, was, therefore, in effect to demonstrate its utility. But the reasonings of the most enlightened philosophers could do no more than excite this salutary fear in theory. The Scripture alone makes it real and efficacious. The very thought of Cicero is exquisitely met and accomplished (but, how astonishingly outdone!) in that matchless effusion of the Psalmist: "Thou art about my path, and about my bed, and spiest out all my ways; for, lo! there is not a word in my tongue, but thou, O Lord, knowest it altogether. Whither shall I go, then, from thy spirit, or whither shall I go, then, from thy presence? If I climb up into heaven, thou art there; if I go down to hell, thou art there also; if I take the wings of the morning, and remain in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there also shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me."

But such testimonies as these would require volumes to do them justice; I shall, therefore, only

mention another, which I think worthy of particular notice. The same accomplished philosopher points out an attentive consideration of the heavens, and their various, yet wonderfully regular, movements, as, of all others, the fittest means of acquiring a moral temper of mind: "For this," says he, "will inspire piety, and with piety will justice be joined as well as all those other virtues which make the life of man equal to that of the gods." Further than this, perhaps, heathen wisdom could not possibly have proceeded. But how is the same thought exalted and perfected in that incomparable Psalm, where, after having recognised, like Cicero, the glory of God in the heavens, the divine poet goes on from thence to admire the moral energy of God's law, rising as much above the philosopher in the distinctness of his views, as the dawn of the morning exceeds the dim lustre of the stars. "The law of the Lord," says he, "is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever; the judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether; more to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb: moreover, by them is thy servant taught, and in keeping of them there is great reward." Here the true notion of piety is realised; the train of thought had begun in that very contemplation which Cicero recommends, but it did not terminate in barren speculation, because



the word of God was to David a comment on creation.

Such was the wisdom conveyed to God's earlier worshippers even through the Scriptures of the Old Testament ; and, comparatively imperfect as it was, it formed them to a substantial virtue, and yielded to them a pure and inward happiness to which no heathen philosophy could ever raise its votaries. All that philosophy could do, was to conjecture about God. Even from this, no doubt, moral benefits accrued to the sincere lover of truth ; but it never could produce rational love to God, nor, of course, steady confidence in him. Accordingly, we find very little semblance of either in any of the ancient sages. In the Holy Scriptures, on the contrary, we find both in their highest and happiest exercises. We see human nature exalted into a kind of delightful and filial familiarity with its eternal and infinite Author, from whence flow the truest virtue and the most comfortable security : " God," says the Psalmist, " is our hope and strength, a very present help in trouble ; therefore will we not fear though the earth be moved, and though the hills be carried into the midst of the sea." And even when wandering in the wilderness of Judea, and hiding himself in the caves of the wild goats, David's feeling is, " Because thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee. Thus will I bless thee while I live, I will lift up my hands in thy name. My soul shall be satisfied with marrow and fatness when my mouth praiseth thee with joyful lips : when I remember thee on my bed, and meditate on thee in the



nightwatches, because thou hast been my helper; therefore under the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice." Let these sentiments be compared with those of the excited Cicero, and these feelings with those of the disappointed Brutus. And, then, let the man of candour pronounce, whether David's view of things was not as much conducive to superior happiness, as it was correspondent with superior truths. And as to its effects on the spirit and temper of mind, let us remember that the philosophy of Brutus led him to plunge a dagger into the bosom of his deluded and betrayed benefactor, while the piety of David restrained him on two different occasions from injuring the person of Saul, his cruellest enemy, at the very moment when he was seeking David's life, and had, by what is called accident, fallen into his hands. "Then said Abishai unto David (when, after repeated treachery on the part of Saul, he was a second time within the power of his persecuted son-in-law), God hath delivered thine enemy into thy hand this day; now, therefore, let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear to the earth at once, and I will not smite him again. But David said unto Abishai, destroy him not, for who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed and be guiltless? As the Lord liveth, the Lord shall smite him, or his day shall come to die, or he shall descend into battle and perish. The Lord forbid that I should stretch forth my hand against the Lord's anointed."

That David fell from this tenderness of mind, and yielded himself up to baseness and cruelty, is

but too true; but this was the fault of the man, not of his principles. Had he retained these in their full force, they would necessarily have preserved him from those sins which he committed: for we see, that so soon as the sense of religion was revived in him, that instant he views his own conduct with horror, and expresses himself in terms of the deepest contrition. And here again, we see, in a new point of view, the suitableness of scriptural principles to the moral exigencies of man. To so frail a creature the means of awakening conscience from its too frequent slumbers is, at least, as necessary as a directive influence, which, without the other, would be only fitted for a state of moral soundness. But where are there to be found, except in the Holy Scriptures, moral truths strong enough and clear enough to produce rational and effectual contrition of heart? For this purpose, peculiarly, was needed a clear display of the Divine Governor of the world, as the lover and source of goodness, and the terrible avenger of all malice and cruelty. Such a display is made to us in every part of Scripture; and it was made specially to David by the prophet in that beautiful apologue of the ewe-lamb. But, let us attend to the effects produced, as they are perpetuated in the 51st Psalm. The feeling of remorse is deep and dreadful. But there are none of the unmeaning horrors of superstition, nor any of those weak attempts to appease an angry Deity, which we should certainly meet with in any other similar case, except in the Scripture. Here, on the contrary, every feeling is moral, and what even a

candid unbeliever could not but admire and approve. His wish is exactly what it should be on the largest and justest view of his case. "Create in me a clean heart, O God! and renew a right spirit within me." And his view of the Deity he addresses, is that which revelation alone could inspire. "Thou desirest no sacrifice, else would I give it thee, but thou delightest not in burnt-offerings. The sacrifices of God are a troubled spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God! thou wilt not despise."

These instances of the moral energy of Scripture, in giving a just and happy sense of God, in establishing in the mind the best practical principles, and in calling back the mind to these principles, when, unhappily, it has swerved from them; these are here adduced from the Old Testament, both because it was of this portion of Scripture that St. Paul speaks, and because it cannot but be felt, that if such congruousness with all the moral interests of man be found in the inferior dispensation, while divine grace was but dawning on mankind, how great must be the brightness of that meridian light which has been diffused upon the moral world, by the rising of the Sun of Righteousness!

In order, therefore, to a right estimation of the sacred volume; as we now are favoured with it, we must consider the whole of both Testaments as pointing to the same grand object, the promoting and perfecting the moral happiness of man. We must also keep in view, that this object was to be accomplished by an adequate manifestation of moral



truth, for this both the divine and the philosopher agree in acknowledging as the grand requisite of moral happiness. But moral truth must be not only clearly, but engagingly manifested. It must be made pleasing to the imagination, and interesting to the affections, as well as convincing to the judgment; and it must be adapted to the various affections of desire, hope, complacency, sympathetic tenderness, loving confidence, assimilating attachment.

If, then, we extend our view from the Old Testament to the Gospel, not losing sight of any of those earlier rays, but rather tracing them in their progress, until, from a comparative dimness, they shine more and more unto the perfect day, and retracing them again, that we may perceive the beauty and excellency of each part, as well as the majestic harmony of the whole; on such a continued examination, it must be found and felt, that a well-formed and well-exercised mind will not merely be pleased and satisfied, but will be astonished, and almost enraptured, at the view which will thus be opened of that gracious wisdom of God, which, after being variously communicated in times past through the prophets, was, in the latter days, made fully manifest by his Son, the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person.

It is remarkable, that this latter portion of the Sacred Scriptures has been for the most part admired and praised, even by those who denied its heavenly origin. And how could they avoid this, if they informed themselves at all about it? A heathen

philosopher once said, that if virtue could be visibly seen, it would irresistibly attract affection; and do we not see it in the person and conduct of our blessed Lord and Saviour? Let us only attend to what he says and does, as we still hear and see him in the four Gospels; and, like those of old, we shall all bear him witness, and wonder at the gracious words which proceed out of his mouth.

“We preach Christ crucified,” said St. Paul, “to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness; but unto them who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God, and the wisdom of God.”

Let us, then, try these heavenly lessons by the maxims of the most enlightened philosophers, and see whether their noblest conceptions are not perfectly realised, and yet infinitely outdone. They had disputed much about the divine essence, and the best manner of acknowledging it; but what are all their discussions, compared with that one sentence, “God is a spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth?” and what are all maxims of social morality, but expansions of that simple principle, “Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them?”

It was before observed, that truth, to be effectual, must be made captivating to the imagination, and interesting to the affections. Let us appeal to those who know at once the wisdom of the ancients, and the contents of the Sacred Volume, whether those purposes were ever so well answered as in the discourses, and particularly in the parables, of our Lord? Was ever the absurdity of pride and



self-conceit, and the happiness of an humble spirit, so illustrated as in the parable of the Pharisee and the publican? Was ever the madness of setting the heart on this world's good so exemplified, as in the brief account of him whose grounds brought forth so abundantly, as to require him to pull down his barns and build greater; and that seasonable reproof, "Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee, and then whose shall these things be?" What can more affectingly display the divine goodness to penitents, than the parable of the prodigal son; or what more surely and powerfully inspire the heart with unlimited mercy and charity, than that charming narrative of the good Samaritan?

What is wisdom, if these are not its brightest displays? "With the lowly is wisdom," said Solomon, long before; and said our Divine Master, "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart; and ye shall find rest to your souls." Happiness, or rest of soul, our Divine Saviour well knew, was the grand object of man, and to this, therefore, he ever applies himself. "*Happy*," says he, "are the poor in spirit; *happy* are the meek; *happy* are the merciful; *happy* are the pure in heart."

The plainness and simplicity of these sayings may lead the superficial to overlook their force and fulness. But, if ever there was weight of sentiment and language, it is here; or, if ever truth was rendered attractive by the mode of exhibition, it is in these instances. It is common to inculcate good tempers and right conduct as matter of duty; but here they are pressed upon us as the ingredients of



inward happiness. And, on a moment's calm reflection, do we not ourselves see them to be so? Humility is the parent of contentment, because it restrains all arrogance of demand, all exorbitance of desire. It fits a man to his situation, and makes him content with that he hath. Meekness consists in equability of temper, in gentleness of mind, in immovable self-possession. Is not this itself a security for happiness; for, how many of the miseries of life do we daily see arising from the want of this invaluable temper? Mercifulness, too, is another grand component of happiness. We are made for action and for society; and what can so secure to us the happiness of active and social beings, as a taste for, and a delight in, doing good? "It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes," says a great master of human nature. But a far greater master has carried it still higher. "It is," said he, "more blessed to give than to receive." Purity of heart implies a superiority of soul to every thing low and brutish, to every thing selfish and mean, a freedom from little views and sinister ends; and, on the contrary, a relish and love of every thing truly great and good. This our Redeemer places next after mercy, because it is necessary to the reality, as well as the duration of mercy; a wrong end spoiling the temper, as surely as it warps the principles; on which St. James has given the noblest comment, when he says, that "the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy:" a sentence which deserves to be written in letters of gold.

Is not this wisdom the purest, the most perfect, the most effectual wisdom? And yet, what are these, but one or two rays of that mass of light which God has embodied in the Scriptures, as he has placed the material sun in the heavens? But it is not wisdom to know these things; our Lord has put it on other grounds: "Happy are ye," said he, "if ye do them."

Even the few specimens which I have now adduced, are sufficient to satisfy any sober understanding, that all that philosophy had been seeking for, is in the Bible. Do we then study this book with the attention which, on this supposition, is rationally due to it? This is the lowest act of duty which it demands from us. We cannot have any benefit from the Scripture without this. But, even studying the Scripture will not do, except our hearts and affections are engaged by the truths it contains. It is the character of the happy man, that his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law will he exercise himself day and night.

But in this peculiarly is the wisdom and goodness of God manifested, that the holy Scripture is so formed, as that whosoever studies, will be almost necessarily drawn to love it. I have already mentioned some of its attractive qualities. But the great attraction lies in this, that throughout the Scripture there is a divine magnetism fitted, by the Author of all things, to all the deepest sensibilities of the human heart. There is in every part of it where instruction is intended, a certain divine influence, which induces serious thought, enkindles holy



desire, inspires good resolutions. It places everywhere before us, that which our hearts tell us is "the one thing needful;" and while it instructs us in principles, it draws us by examples. But its grand energy is the view it gives us of a Redeemer. It is in him we are to find the central light, where all the rays converge. For "it is He," as the Apostle says, "who is made of God unto us, wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."

"This is life eternal," said the Divine Teacher himself, "to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." That is, to have the mind practically impressed with that view of God's presence and power which his word displays; and to have the heart attracted and fixed by the wise and gracious lessons which Christ taught, by that divine love and mercy which flowed forth in every portion of his life, and by that most awful of all events, his dying a sacrifice, in order to render our sins pardonable, making thereby sin to appear exceeding sinful. To feel, I say, all this deeply, affectionately, habitually, and influentially, would be indeed Life eternal; because from this very feeling would grow up in us the work of righteousness, which would be peace, and the effect thereof quietness and assurance for ever.

It is to be peculiarly remembered, with an eye to this part of the subject, that the Holy Scriptures are not only, or chiefly, to be considered as a *code of laws*, or a *body of maxims*; they do contain laws of the most awful obligation, and maxims of the most consummate wisdom. But what could



laws or maxims avail of themselves for sinful, wretched man? "By the deeds of the law," says St. Paul, "shall no flesh be justified, for by the law is the knowledge of sin;" that is, sinful, fallen man cannot draw any other benefit from a mere code of laws (be it ever so clear), than to learn his own utter incapacity of keeping it, and, of course, his own sinfulness in the sight of God, "who hateth iniquity." What, then, is that whereby the weakness of man is provided for?

Hear the Apostle. "For," said he, "what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, walking not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

The full purport of these words (which are, in fact, an epitome of what is strictly called the Gospel) would lead into too wide a field to explain. But whatever else they mean (and what man on this earth, nay, what angel, perhaps, in heaven, is able to fathom their entire depth?), they certainly seem to imply, that the records of the Gospel respecting our Saviour's life, miracles, discourses, death, resurrection, and ascension; what he did, taught, and suffered; and what his inspired followers have written concerning him, and the ends of his coming into the world in that divine volume, the New Testament, has in it a certain ineffable energy of divine wisdom and goodness, by which the heart of every serious and humble reader will be attracted, engaged, and quickened in such a manner, as no

moral reasoning, no philosophical ingenuity, no practical precepts, although coming from God himself, can, or ever could effect.

The great end of religion, is to draw the heart of man from the love of sin, and of this lower world, to the love of God and of holiness; to a superiority over present allurements; and to a temper and taste fitted for the enjoyment of a better state. For this purpose, rules and maxims would not be sufficient. These might tell us our duty, but they would not make us love it. But it is the love of duty, and not the mere performance of it, which constitutes the reality of virtue. To this end, not only the mind must be enlightened, but the affections must be attracted; the heart must be made to feel what the understanding comprehends, or the knowledge of duty will be cold and fruitless.

Do not, then, the life and death of Christ; the voluntary humiliation of Him, "in whom dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;" the death he suffered, as a sacrifice for sin; the divine power he manifested in rising from the dead; do not these constitute an assemblage of the most awful and influential facts that the mind of man can contemplate? In order to be truly virtuous, it is indispensable that we should feel the exceeding evil of sin. But how can we perceive this more forcibly, than in the contemplation of that sacrifice, which, according (as we conceive) to the immutable principles of the divine government, was necessary to expiate it? Is love of pleasure our besetting sin? Were we but impressed with the self-denying



life of our Redeemer, how would it shame us out of our self-indulgence? Is the world our idol, its ease, its honours? How would such feelings be suppressed by the lively apprehension of the humility and poverty of our Divine Master, who, although the whole world was his, “had not where to lay his head;” and who was “despised and rejected of men!” Are we devoid of mercy, and insensible to the wants of our brethren? How would our hearts be melted by the sense of his condescension, who himself “took our infirmities, and bare our weakness?”

It is not, indeed, the bare reading of the text which will produce these effects; for even when Christ himself appeared in person, and delivered his divine instructions, the word preached did not profit, when it was not “mixt with faith in those who heard it.” The sublime displays of the Gospel are certainly meant for the benefit of the serious—of those who feel their evil nature a burden; and who, in some degree, “hunger and thirst after righteousness.” It is to such, peculiarly, that Christ addresses himself, “Come unto me all ye who labour, and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you.” And to such, the facts and truths of the Gospel will ever, through the accompanying grace of the Spirit, prove “the power of God unto salvation;” because to such, the view of Christ will be *assimilative*—the words which he speaks, will be to them “spirit and life;” “And beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, they will be changed into the same image, from glory to glory.”



This heart-affecting, heart-cheering, heart-purifying energy of "God manifested in the flesh," produces in those who experience it, the true wisdom. This, when felt by the lowest peasant, raises him, in true moral science, above all the philosophers of the world.

This was really the philosophy of the apostles. It was by displaying and urging this, that they conquered so many thousands. It was by the strength and comfort they derived from their own feelings of this, that they endured so many difficulties and distresses.

The Second Epistle to the Corinthians, and the Epistle to the Philippians, are full of St. Paul's own view of this great salvation; and from thence it appears, that his whole strength, and comfort, and hope, for time and for eternity, lay in that divine faith, with which he devotedly eyed his great Master.

Is he eager and indefatigable in his apostolic labours? It is because, as he tells us, "The love of Christ constrained him;" that is, he feelingly remembered, or rather had it impressed on his heart, *that Christ died for him*. How, then, should he not labour? Does "the Holy Spirit testify in every city, that bonds and afflictions abide him?" "He is ready not only to be bound, but to die for the name of the Lord Jesus." Does he advert to that love of glory, which, in so many shapes, agitates the breasts of men? "God forbid that he should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world" (that inexhaustible source of temptation to others) "is crucified unto

him, and he unto the world." Does he appear strong in virtue, prepared for every trial? "I can do all things through Christ, that strengthens me." Is he sensible of human weakness? "He glories in his infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon him." Does he look back to the worldly advantages he had relinquished? "He counts all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus." Does he look forward to his ultimate object? "It is, that he may know Christ, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death." Does he exhort others to the practice of the most amiable virtues? It is thus: "Let the same mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." Or, does he sum up, in one word, the perfection of Christian conduct? It is, "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ."

What must have been the feelings that dictated these expressions! What efficacy, what power, what consolation, must St. Paul have been conscious of, from having his mind established in this divine contemplation! But were these feelings peculiar to St. Paul? No. In every age and nation, they who have, with like humility, seriousness, and prayer, applied themselves to the contemplation of Gospel truths, and to the study of Christ's character and offices, as set forth in the New Testament; such, I say, have uniformly felt, more or less, of the same heart-quickenings influences, and have learned the lessons of genuine wisdom, in the same summary manner.

In all ages, they who have walked with Christ,



and, as it were, talked with him by the way, have felt their hearts, like the disciples at Emmaus, "to burn within them:" and they who have applied their hearts to this wisdom, have found him to be "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

In order, then, to conceive aright of the Holy Scriptures, we must consider both Testaments as making up one grand connected manifestation of God to man, progressively communicated as the divine wisdom saw fitting, but now presenting itself to us as a complete whole, in all its fulness and perfection. In both Testaments, the object is to lead man to true piety, and by that, to goodness and happiness; and in both, by such matter-of-fact display as was deemed by Omniscience most engaging to the human mind, and most attractingly influential on the human heart. We should, therefore, always keep in remembrance, that the Old Testament is, in fact, introductive of the New, and the New, perfective of the Old. In the Old Testament, God shews himself chiefly as the God of creation and providence, in order to excite in the mind awe, reverence, and obedient submission. In the New, he shews himself as the God of grace and mercy, in order to excite filial confidence and complacental love. In the former instance, he chose a narrowed sphere, because, in such a scene, his providential attributes might be more comprehensively and clearly illustrated for the information and instruction of future ages. But "when the fulness of time was come," and he who "spake in times past by the prophets," revealed himself by his Son, though it was still in the same scene that this



Divine Being shewed himself; the beams of his light, like those of the orient sun, speedily diffused themselves without limit, carrying with them, to the ends of the earth, all the vital principles of moral light and happiness.

All this, therefore, we have in the Holy Scriptures; and we shall find, upon examination, that the moral and religious influences of the Old Testament differ from those of the New but as the opening dawn of the morning differs from the splendour of the fully risen sun. Thus, the faith of Abraham is, substantially, the same with that of Peter and Nathanael; and the fervent piety of David and Isaiah is, in its essence, one with that of St. Paul and St. John. The New Testament, therefore, always supposes the Old; and while it makes provision for a nobler virtue, and a more exalted happiness, retains, as instruments of its design, all the former energies; adding to them, however, a new efficacy from the clearer light which is now cast back upon them, and the more abundant grace which accompanies them.

Such, evidently, is what St. Paul intimates, when he says, that "the Scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation;" and, accordingly, the hearts of all true Christians, in all ages, have felt by their own experience, that the Old Testament, as well as the New, is "profitable" (as St. Paul says immediately afterwards) "for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

Let us now review the few observations which have been offered, and seriously ask our own hearts,

whether we have yet formed a right estimate of this wonderful volume; or are, in any reasonable degree, aware of the account we must one day give of this, our greatest of all talents? Let us consider, that all that God has done in the world, in order to our eternal welfare, is, as it were, concentrated and deposited for our use in this invaluable book. It is the eternal conduit through which the grace of God, the water of life that issues forth from the throne of God and of the Lamb, is conveyed into the hearts of those, who, feeling the deep moral thirst of their nature, and sensible that nothing earthly can allay it, turn from all the broken cisterns of the world, to "the fountain of living waters." If we are really immortal, as well as mortal beings, of what infinite importance is it, that we should be furnished with some principle of life and comfort, that will outlive the storms of time, and remain with us through all possible changes of existence?

And what can that principle be, but the heart-purifying, heart-ennobling love of our eternal Parent, "of whom, and through whom, and to whom, are all things?" But love can be kindled only by the knowledge of attractive good; and the acquisition of that knowledge must depend upon adequate manifestation.

Here, then, we come at once at the real character of the Holy Scriptures. They are God's own most divine contrivance, for effectually manifesting himself to all, in all ages, who will hear his voice; and for leading them by the sweetest and most



suitable attractions to their own true happiness, here and hereafter.

Fear and love are both necessary ingredients to a true filial temper; and such a temper towards our all-perfect, all-gracious Father, so strongly felt as to be our master-affection, is precisely that to which the Holy Scriptures are intended, and divinely fitted to lead us. To excite our fear, to impress us with holy awe, to convince us that with God is terrible majesty, he shews himself to us, throughout the Old Testament, in a most astonishing, but most instructive series of providential operations. Here we see him, the Creator of all things, and within what, from a distance, appears a very narrow space, the maker and the destroyer of a world. We see him, in following times, the avenger of hardened impenitence, the inscrutable disposer of all earthly destinies, whether of empires, cities, families, or individuals. We see his eye over the righteous, but his countenance set terribly "against them that do evil." We see kings moving at his will; vast armies coming together at his unheard, but irresistible command; and when attempting to exceed the limit of his power, destroyed, as with a breath.

We see all created nature—the sun in the firmament, the vapours in the atmosphere and in the bowels of the earth, the raging billows, the inhabitants of the great deep, the beasts of the forest, and the fowls of the air—all the prompt ministers of his will. Yet, even here, in order to exalt fear into rational piety, we see also the gracious movings of his milder attributes. We see him choosing out



of the mass of mankind a peculiar people, in order to prepare by a mysterious, but, doubtless, an infinitely wise process, a heaven of divine virtue, whereby at length to leaven the whole earth.

Here, in a narrow stage, as best fitted for such a purpose, we see more distinctly the principles and methods of his providence, both in the way of punishment and of mercy. We see his protecting power accompanying the chosen Abraham, whose example is set up, as an everlasting record of the worth and excellence of generous uncompromising devotedness of heart. We see the Sovereign of the universe watching the nightly slumbers of a single, solitary wanderer. We see him disposing all the minute circumstances in the life of an exiled youth, who rises at length from the lowest of servitudes, to be the deliverer of nations, and the cherisher of that holy seed, of which he was himself a portion. We see, in short, an uniform condescension to humble virtue, and an equally uniform resistance to arrogance and pride. We see also the moral will of this Great Being variously announced; and we see, under these displays of providence, and these manifestations of virtue, such effects in real life, such formation of character, such exemplifications of virtue, such expressions and exercises of devotion, such zeal for God's honour, and readiness to die for the truth, as altogether form the most valuable and most interesting body of instruction that the human imagination can conceive.

But, still, much more was wanting to draw the human heart more fully to its God. With the fear

of the Old Testament, confidence and hope might strongly mingle themselves; but love is the chief affection of the soul; and an adequate attraction for this was yet wanting. In a moment of grateful devotion, when the mind was raised to rapture by some newly conferred benefit, it might be felt. But there appear to be no principles as yet set in action, which could establish and perpetuate such a sentiment. We accordingly see, that the best characters in the Old Testament are liable to be overcome by temptation, when the peculiar weakness of their character happened to be assailed. They were strong when their leading passions were the auxiliaries of their piety; but when their own corruptions fell in with the external excitement, they were generally foiled. There was little in the Old Testament system to humble the soul, and less to make it dead to the world. The main springs of the mind were not sufficiently held to a right direction. The heart was awed and influenced, but it was not thoroughly softened, nor radically changed. What a few more favoured spirits might have attained, it is not for us to determine; but it is obvious, that complete inward rectitude was not then the privilege of the existing covenant, because it is repeatedly referred in the divine predictions to a future period. "I will take you," says God, by the prophet Ezekiel, "from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart will I give you, and a



new spirit will I put into you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh; and I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes; and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." Such is the prospect of better times, twice announced by Ezekiel, and once, at least in effect, by Jeremiah.

In the New Testament this is fully realised; for there, God, who aforetime awed the world by his terrors, effectually conquered it by his love. He there shewed himself to mortals, taking on him the garb of mortality; and, "being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." I have already dwelt upon the heart-affecting efficacy of these events, when contemplated by the eye of faith. I shall now only adduce our Lord's own striking intimation of the superior moral energy which his Gospel was intended to diffuse: "Among them that are born of women, there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist; yet he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

But let me repeat, what I have already observed, that the Old Testament, as it now stands connected with the New, has been animated (as it were) with the spirit of the more perfect dispensation; so that "whatsoever things were written aforetime, were," in the strictest sense, "written for our learning." And with what astonishing wisdom and condescension has it been provided, that even its most ancient parts should never have become obsolete! The ceremonial law alone was but temporary; but



every where else, the principles, the sentiments, the expressions, are those, as it were, of immutable human nature: and let it be remembered and felt, that every where the whole mind of man is provided for—his imagination no less than his understanding, his taste as really as his conscience. The sublime, the beautiful, the pathetic; the strong, but easy outline; the rich, yet simple colouring; all, and much more than all, that ingenuity or art could accomplish, are here brought together without art, to constitute a spiritual Eden, more than a substitute for that which was forfeited;—for the mind to expatiate in without limit, and gather from the tree of life, without dread of any flaming sword, that fruit which is to restore man to his lost immortality.

Let us ask ourselves, are we sufficiently sensible of the treasure we possess? Do we use it as we ought? Are we not in danger of being called for our negligence to a strict account? What trifles are they that engage us! What base things do we doat on, while the Pearl of great price lies overlooked or trampled upon! Is it only for a future life that the influences of this book are available? Were it even so, it must still be said that neglect is desperate frenzy: but the godliness which this mysterious volume is fitted to lead to, has “the promise of the life that now is, no less than of that which is to come.” “Great peace have they that love thy law, and nothing shall offend them.”

The noblest feelings of the most exalted heroes are but infant imitations of those exalted sentiments which the lover of the Scripture drinks in from the

words and example of his Divine Master ; and all the moral philosophy of the heathen world is but a shapeless mass, an unvitalised chaos, compared with that single portraiture of Christian charity exhibited in St. Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians. I might even add, that the brightest visions of the most enraptured poet are but delirious dreams, compared with that joy in God, that peace which passeth all understanding, that hope full of immortality, which the true Christian feels when his heart becomes fully impregnated with those heavenly influences.

What is that which we call the sublime in nature, but a ray of Deity conveyed to us, like that which the atmosphere transmits from the yet unrisen sun, to apprise us of approaching day ? But what are all the feeble lights of nature, compared with that immediate and complete effulgence of Deity by which the Scripture would rouse us to the day of eternity ?

Need any thing be added to the observations already made, to prove that, in the Holy Scriptures, as complete provision is made for human happiness as for human virtue ? The deep necessity for such a provision has been referred to in the beginning of these Reflections. And must it not be strongly felt, that where there are such means for producing goodness in the heart, and rectitude in the conduct, happiness must follow by a necessity of nature ? For what is happiness but harmonised and purified affections, exercised, in the best manner, on the fittest and most satisfying objects, with certainty of

continuance, and room for never-ending improvement?

Let it be remembered, that scriptural goodness is not, like the morality of the Stoics, a love of abstract virtue; but it is a love of the intelligent, communicative, infinite Source of virtue: and that, not in the way of conjectural theory, like that spoken of by the ancient Platonists and modern Theists of Asia, but with a practical confidential affection, as rational as it is ardent, because it has matter-of-fact for its foundation.

Now, what, in matters of this lower world, gives so much pleasure as the exercise of affection towards a virtuous, wise, and kind friend? The heart which is fitted for such a feeling delights to cultivate it, because it is felt to be its own reward. What, then, must be the happiness of exercising grateful, confidential love towards that Being who is infinite perfection; from whom, as from their single, inexhaustible source, flow all those streams of virtue and benignity, and all those rays of truth, of grandeur, and of beauty, which animate and irradiate created nature; and who, at the same time, is humbly and surely trusted in, as taking the wisest, kindest, minutest cognisance of every creature, throughout the universe, that looks sincerely towards Him! Can any thing fill, satisfy, or exalt the human mind, like such a sentiment as this? Yet is this no more than scriptural devotion: this is the very feeling which a vivid apprehension of Him whom the Scripture reveals has ever inspired; and with the highest and hap-



piest expressions of this feeling the sacred books abound.

The Book of Psalms, in particular, is a continued exemplification of it. "Thy favour is better than the life itself," says David. "In thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand is pleasure for ever more. My soul shall be satisfied, as it were, with marrow and fatness, when my mouth praiseth thee with joyful lips. Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth, but thou art the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever."

But even this, as I before intimated, is but Old Testament piety. The contemplation of "God manifest in the flesh," which forms the grand object of the New Testament, calls forth new energies, while it gives infinitely additional interest to the Old. It is, to be sure, the humble and purified soul only, which can fully relish this hidden manna of the sanctuary; "the bread which came down from heaven, and giveth life to the world," being but light food to those who have been habituated to "the flesh-pots of Egypt." But, were our minds once so enlightened from above as to be really sensible of the bondage of sin, and to conceive something of the happiness of a holy temper and an habitual spirit of devotion, then should we find so much vivid power in our blessed Lord's discourses, so assimilating an influence in his divine character, and so much invaluable hope in his gracious mediation, that the language of our hearts would be that of the Apostles, — "Lord,

to whom should we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

The character of the happy man given by David is, "that his delight is in the law of the Lord:" that is, as a well-tuned ear delights in concord of sweet sounds; as a tasteful eye drinks in those rays of light, which convey to the imagination the images of picturesque grandeur and beauty; so, in a similar, but infinitely exalted way, does the spiritualised mind find its truest satisfaction in those expressions of divine perfection and benignity which the Divine Word every where exhibits.

But it is in the Word made flesh that the perfections of the Divine Nature are fully prepared and fitted for the contemplation of such frail intelligences as ours. Here the delight is perfect, because here the influence is complete. Here the essential attributes of the infinite Jehovah are softened into the form of human virtues, that they may be viewed without fear; that they may be approached with humble confidence; that they may be familiarised to our minds; and that they may insinuate themselves into the very substance of our souls by a sweet, but resistless energy.

If human excellence furnishes a most gratifying object to a well-exercised imagination, what must be felt in rightly apprehending the grace of our Redeemer, where the virtue contemplated (if rightly valued and admired) never fails to rise into being, and grow into strength, while the mind's eye is fixed on its all-prolific, ever-communicative source?

Let it not be thought this is exaggerated lan-

guage: the subject is too serious to be embellished with rhetoric; but it is also too great to be done justice to, even by the strongest expressions.

Who can set bounds to the moral and religious delight of which the human mind is capable? But, on what object can it be so delightfully fixed as on that where every thing that is greatest in the highest heavens is united with every thing that the utmost fancy can deem most amiable, and most tenderly interesting to man? The feelings of the sceptical Rousseau on this subject are well worth our attention. These were, certainly, no Christian prejudices; yet what Christian, under the strongest impressions of devotion, could have given a fuller testimony?

“Is this the tone of an enthusiast?” says he. “What sweetness, what purity in his manners! what persuasive grace in his instructions! what delicacy, and yet what sweetness, in his replies! what empire over his passions! Where is the man—where is the sage,—who could thus act, suffer, and die, at once without weakness and without ostentation? If the life and death of Socrates are those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus are those of a God.”

Surely, than this there can be no higher statement of human excellence. Nay, even this infidel confesses, that it cannot be kept within the bounds of human nature. Let, then, faith—the feeling of an humble, lowly, penitent, and obedient heart—be added to this view. Let it be felt that, under this divine exterior, “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.” Let us unite, in our



thoughts, the height of inconceivable majesty with the depth of poverty, of labour, of persecution. Let us add to this the infinite grandeur of the design, and the awful momentous relation in which we all stand to Him who thus lived and died to draw us from sin to God, and from death to life eternal; who is at this moment sending forth his gracious influences into every heart that will receive Him; and who will shortly pronounce a dreadful sentence upon all who wilfully reject Him. Let us, I say, try to connect all these astonishing particulars into one view; and say, whether, to a conscientiously good man, who humbly, yet confidently, hopes that the purposes of this great plan are even now accomplishing, and will be more and more accomplished, in himself; whose heart feels, practically, influentially, and permanently, all, and much more than all, that the mind of Rousseau tasted transiently in a moment of rapturous excitement—and then let it be said, whether any happiness of which intelligent nature is capable can be thought to exceed such a state of mind, except only that happiness of heaven of which this is the pledge and the prelibation.

Such, however, is the certain happiness of him who acquires, through God's gracious influence, a heart-attachment to the Holy Scriptures. "He that cometh to me," saith Christ, "shall never hunger, and he that believeth in me shall never thirst. For the water that I will give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life."

LETTER TO J. S. HARFORD, ESQ. ON THE  
SEVENTH CHAPTER TO THE ROMANS.

MY DEAR MR. HARFORD,

1825.

Your letter gave me greater pleasure than I could easily express. I was confident of the ground I had taken, but very diffident of my success in doing it justice. I waited, therefore, with no little anxiety, for the judgment you might pass on my attempted elucidation : I need not tell you how much your estimate of it has pleased and satisfied me. In truth, I feel unspeakable gratification in your cordial disposition to extend your view as far as Holy Scripture opens its bright vista before you.

I am not surprised at what you tell me of Mr. —'s adherence to the low interpretation of the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans ; yet, I certainly regret that a mind which, to appearance, was so winged by Nature, should, "after much reflection," conclude itself doomed, not only to go upon all fours, but to bear a heavy chain through life. However, I am really so much of an optimist as to be ready to think, that when so upright a man sees that passage of Scripture in a light so contrary to what I conceive indicated by

its whole structure, it is, somehow or other, best for him so to understand it; and that any other meaning of it would be disproportioned to the general scheme of doctrine in which his favourite authors have trained him, and which, in the course of nature, has become more and more rooted and grounded in all his mental habits.

I, accordingly, imagine, that the "much reflection" of which Mr. — speaks, consisted rather in bringing the passage under the successive or concurrent light of the teachers whom he studied, than in examining the words of St. Paul by their own light, and eliciting from themselves their precise logical import. I am persuaded that, whenever the passage has been thus attentively considered, the result has been exactly as it was in the instance of Dr. Doddridge, whose note I conceive to state St. Paul's real meaning with unbiassed judgment and conscientious frankness.

But, while Doddridge's note is as clear and comprehensive as its length would allow, the grounds of the interpretation could not be introduced. I would wish, therefore, to direct your attention to one or two particulars in St. Paul's mode of treating the subject, which may possibly not have struck you, and which, I think, greatly strengthen the conclusions in which you are already disposed to rest.

I need not, on this occasion, use any thing else than the English translation, as sufficient justice is done in it to St. Paul's language. Turn, then, if you please, to the fifth verse of the chapter; and think, whether we have not here, in a single sen-



tence, the theme which is descanted on in the following verses, commencing with the seventh and ending with the twenty-fourth.

It is a remarkable practice of St. Paul to introduce a next topic just before he concludes the topic in hand. In the doctrinal part of the Epistle to the Romans he scarcely ever fails to observe this rule, as I could exemplify in various instances; but it will suffice to mention that instance which occurs in the end of the fifth chapter, where you will observe a foundation laid for the discussion in the former part of the sixth chapter, by the remark made in the twentieth verse of the fifth chapter; after which he returns to and finishes the important matter he had been propounding. Thus, you may perceive that the first verse of the sixth chapter hangs upon the twentieth verse of the fifth, like a hook inserted into the eye which was previously provided for it.

I have directed your attention to this peculiarity in St. Paul's composition,—or, I should rather say, in the structure of this particular Epistle,—because, if the import of the fifth verse of the seventh chapter were not of itself sufficiently obvious, the Apostle's prevalent method of thus referring to what was about to follow would invincibly establish the force of the proposition. “When we were in the flesh,” he says, “the motions of sin, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.”

Now, what were the motions of sin, which were by the law (I mean, what could the idea

implied by this expression amount to), but those very sensations which the Apostle proceeds to describe? The motions of sin which wrought in the members could be no other than those risings of concupiscence, of which he was unconscious, till, after a course of self-complacency in the regularity of his outward obedience (which he calls being "alive without the law once"), he felt the force of that inward commandment, "Thou shalt not covet." It appears that the Apostle, or the person whose character he assumes, had been so engaged with the external commandments as to have overlooked the spiritual precept with which the decalogue concluded; but which, when once adverted to, was felt to contain the concentrated force of the whole moral law. He, therefore, calls it the law and the commandment, as if it alone was worthy of the name; because this commandment alone went to the root of all moral evil, as being "a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." In fact, to feel the force of the law in this inward respect was essential to the due apprehension of its moral nature; for outward commandments, separate from their moral spirit, become positive instead of moral injunctions. Accordingly, at the very time when the inward force of the law was so detecting in him "all manner of concupiscence," as to appear as if itself had produced what it so vividly discovered, it more and more manifests its own contrasted excellence: it is "holy, just, good," spiritual, and, at length, even delightful to his higher mind; though the

corruption of his lower nature is still holding him in a captivity, from which, as yet, he does not even see the means of deliverance.

Now, that this entire conflict is comprehended in, and identical with, the brief statement in the fifth verse, is evinced by this circumstance, that "the motions of sin in the members," there spoken of, are said to have been "by the law;" and, therefore, a synchronism and co-identity with what follows are necessarily implied. For, there would not have been "motions of sin by the law" in one who was "alive without the law:" the commandment must have "come," before it could have thus seemed to give new force to depravity; and, accordingly, this very idea again and again recurs, or, rather, is dwelt upon, as the point chiefly to be illustrated.

He says, "When the commandment came sin revived, and I died;" and "the commandment which in its nature tends to life (here I am obliged to alter the translation), was found to tend to death; for sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me and by it slew me; that is (evidently), slew all the hopes I had cherished, while I attended merely to the plausibility of an outward righteousness, and a mechanical obedience." What is all this, therefore, but the saying, in other words, and with more vivid expansion, that "the motions of sin, which were by the law," did work in his members, to bring forth fruit unto death?" And the conflict is accordingly terminated in the exclamation, "Oh, wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"



I can say no more on the co-identity of meaning; but does it follow, from that fact, that, in the latter part of the chapter, St. Paul does not mean to describe the state of an enlightened Christian? Yes, it most certainly follows; for, if we revert to that same fifth verse, we shall find the exact time marked in which the state therein described had existed: “*When we were in the flesh,*” he says, “the motions of sin, which were by the law, did work in our members, to bring forth fruit unto death.” Consequently, all St. Paul had written from the commencement of the 7th, to the end of the 24th verse (inasmuch as it is a mere descant on the position in the 5th verse), belongs to the carnal, and not to the spiritual state; to the condition of those who, in the fullest sense, are under the law (the “law in their members warring against the law of their mind, and bringing them into captivity to the law of sin which is in their members”), but by no means to the condition of those “whom the law of the spirit of life, in Christ Jesus, hath made free from the law of sin and death.”

If the force of the expression, “in the flesh” (verse 5th), could be doubted, its meaning is settled by what is said in the next chapter: (viii. 8) “They that are in the flesh cannot please God; but ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if the Spirit of God dwell in you; but if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” Still, however, we must understand these strong positions so as to preserve the strict consistency of St. Paul’s deeply digested discourse. The state

described in the 5th verse of the seventh chapter, as that of "being in the flesh," implies not a willing, but an unwilling subjugation. It is, therefore, as much superior to the state of moral insensibility as it is inferior to that of moral strength and liberty. The law of God is recognised, and its excellence is felt. The commandment irritates the moral diseases which it has detected; yet still it is esteemed and delighted in by the rational faculty, although evil propensities and habits are, every now and then, gaining a practical ascendancy. But there is, at the same time, a progress marked in the description, which implies a growing aptitude for moral disenthralment, and manifests the sincerity of a servant of God, though not possessing the liberty of his children.

The passage, therefore, is not only an exquisite elucidation of the subserviency of the legal economy to that of the Gospel, and of the manner in which not only the ceremonial, but the moral law, was a schoolmaster, to bring those who had been under it to Him who was to give deliverance to the captives: it is, besides this, an exemplification of that intermediate state which lies, in the nature of things, between the state of sin and the state of grace. The requisites of moral happiness were understood, in part, by enlightened Pagans; but, beyond comparison, more clearly apprehended by upright Jews. Still, the utmost which could be attained (except by extraordinary vouchsafement from above), was moral knowledge, rather than moral power. It is plain, at the same time, that moral knowledge was most wisely provided for, in

the first instance; and that it was necessary to leave time for its operation, before the means of moral power should be afforded. For, who would have valued the proffered communication of Divine grace from a "fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness," if the depth of man's moral disease had not been previously and sensibly demonstrated, by a lengthened trial of universal frailty and proclivity, and of the inefficiency, not only of all merely moral means discovered by the light of reason, but even revealed from heaven, to loose the fetters of corruption, and to establish a well-founded peace of conscience?

What was thus necessary in the great moral economy of the world, is no less necessary to the eventual happiness of every individual who has not been successfully brought up in "the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Wherever sin has gained ascendancy, and reduced its victim to a willing servitude, there must be a discovery of the thralldom, a sense of the misery, a groaning under the intolerable yoke; else, that Gospel of Christ, which is "the power of God unto salvation," will neither be esteemed nor resorted to. St. Paul's impressive picture of the internal conflict is, therefore, nothing else than a representation of what every practical Christian, who is brought to true religion by what divines used to call "the way of repentance," must more or less experience.

It, therefore, suited the comprehensiveness of St. Paul's doctrinal scheme, that this stage in the Christian course, through which such multitudes were to pass, should be vividly and accurately



delineated; and, no doubt, his own experience had taught not only the substance, but the detail, of this description. It is impossible to say what he might have felt in his mind, even before he went to Damascus; but the interval between our Lord's appearance to him on the way, and the visit of Ananias, (for which, however, he was prepared by the dawning consolation of a Divine vision), could have been no other than a season of mental conflict, inasmuch as, during that time, "he neither ate nor drank."

I think I have sufficiently occupied you with this particular topic. I have dwelt upon it, not because I thought it was at all needful for *you*; but because I wished to communicate to you my precise view of this strangely disputed subject. I certainly do not wonder that theologists of the Calvinistic school should overlook the connexion between the fifth verse of the seventh chapter, and the moral struggle afterwards described; because to discover niceties of argument is the property not of fettered, but of free, thought. What, however, really does surprise me, is, that the exclamation in the twenty-fourth verse, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" could be ascribed to any informed Christian; for although, in an hour of depression, a sincere Christian might be led to ask himself, in what manner or by what means he could be extricated from his mental conflicts, he could not but know that there was only one deliverer; and St. Paul, especially, must have had that Divine assurance in his recollection—"My grace is sufficient for

thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness." Was it possible, that he to whom this was said should ever afterwards ask, "*Who shall deliver me?*" And ought not this single inconsistency for ever to dispel the fancy that St. Paul in this passage was speaking of himself, or indeed of any other rational Christian?

LETTER TO MRS. —, ON THE PERSONALITY OF  
THE HOLY SPIRIT.

MY DEAR MADAM,

I CONCEIVE that as far as the writer of that letter is concerned, you need not regret your declining to hear the objections against the personality of the Holy Spirit. I dare say the writer is perfectly aware of the texts on which that point of faith is founded. Her defect lies, I believe, in her power of apprehending them; and consequently would not be remedied by their being ever so repeatedly brought before her. It is not a hopeful case, when evidence peculiarly distinguished by directness and simplicity, is passed by as inconclusive. It shews that the mind is either perverted by habit, or defective in organisation. Expressions of candour and humility in such cases may be morally sincere, but they would appear, in point of fact, to bespeak settledness of persuasion, much rather than openness to conviction. I believe I have already expressed an opinion to you, that on religious subjects nothing is more sure to bewilder, than the want of subordination of the understanding to the affections. It is not, however, a remark or two, that could throw even a faint light on this profound subject. But, to speak intelligibly in as



few words as I can, I would say, that the terms used in Scripture to convey the most essential truths, are always such as address not the intellect alone, but the whole mind; and they rely, as it were, for interpretation, on those habits of feeling as well as thinking, which are derived from nature and developed in society.

If there be not this full and practical apprehension of Scripture facts and truths, the result will be a matter of chance, or caprice, when the understanding works alone on that which was intended to be grasped by all the united powers of the mind; its most plausible conclusions may be no better than that of the blind man who supposed scarlet like the sound of a trumpet.

I humbly conceive, that these observations are in no instance more applicable than to the great articles of faith which those innovators reject. For example, to the mind furnished with just and natural associations (no one of which could be formed if the wax of the mind had not been softened for the impression by some affection), how full and conclusive are those correlative terms in the last chapter of St. Matthew, "*The Father, the Son?*" They are left in their simplicity, as if to make the impression inevitable. A reciprocal relation understood by all, felt by all, woven into the very texture of the human heart, is chosen by Him who knew what was in man, to convey a truth at once, in all its fulness, which could not have been so deeply or so justly conveyed in any other way. The question is, would this mode have been adopted, if the natural

impression were not the right impression? Instead, then, of walking by the light thus afforded, shall we first try whether we cannot split this sunbeam on an argumentative prism? Were men thus to forsake common sense in lower concerns, the folly would soon be seen in its consequences.

One single text, apprehended with the entire mind, would be sufficient of itself to prove the personality of the Holy Ghost. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." Would there be sense in this admonition, if it did not contemplate the Holy Ghost as a person: and if this idea were given without ground, what becomes of the truth and simplicity of Holy Scripture?

I am aware that he who uses intellect alone, will most probably overlook the irresistible force of the words "Grieve not." But let us ask, what corresponding idea do they bespeak in the Apostle's mind? Did he not regard the Divine Spirit as a person, when he exhorted the Ephesians not to grieve him? Shall we thus charge St. Paul with romancing, and that, too, on the gravest subject which could have employed his pen? But the fact is, St. Paul wrote for unspoiled and unsophisticated men; and to such, the form of his admonition will speak volumes. It will instruct them that the "other paraclete" is as really a distinct person, as He in whose name he is sent, otherwise he could not feel either displacency or complacency. It will imply,—that infinitely great as he is in nature,—he takes such interest in man,

that he may be grieved by man; that however much beyond human comprehension, there is a peculiar tenderness and delicacy in this condescending innate of the renovated heart, and that we are therefore to be continually on our guard lest, even inadvertently, we should cause pain, the mysterious depth and exquisiteness of which cannot be conceived by mortals.

I know I am saying what some might think strange, but I give myself to the Holy Spirit's own indication of his nature, in the words of the inspired Apostle. If no more were said on the point but what we have here, and in the discourse of our Lord before his crucifixion, together with his enjoined form of baptism, I could no more doubt the personality of the Holy Ghost, than I could doubt his sanctifying influences. There is no wisdom in being wise above what is written. Was St. Paul deceived, or did he mean to deceive others? If neither be conceivable, then the force of his words must be allowed; for without violence to them, insult to him who used them, and strange irreverence to Him who inspired them, they cannot be applied to a mere influence, be that influence ever so divine, but must be understood of a Being possessing the essentials of distinct personality.

I have dwelt on this most interesting and impressive passage, because it proves the point in question *a fortiori*. To ascribe affection in the manner here exemplified, is to recognise every property which affection presupposes. But if this text were wanting, what could those innovators do with others? For example, "As they minis-



tered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, 'Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.' It is vain to adduce scriptural evidence, if this matter-of-fact statement be disputed. The personality of an agent could not be more expressly affirmed than in these words; and if they are forcibly divested of their natural, and only rational meaning, a like process might at length leave not one scriptural fact on which to rest our belief.

When afterward the Apostles, and Elders, and Brethren, met at Jerusalem, they sanction their decree by this preface: "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us." This was right, good sense, on the ground of the Holy Ghost being a Divine Person, who presided over their assembly: but how is it to be reconciled with the Holy Ghost being merely an influence? how was such an influence thus distinguishable from those who acted under it? Give the Apostles credit for being honest, intelligent men, and allow the words which they use their plain grammatical meaning; then no subterfuge can evade the conclusion.

I have quoted enough: if these passages do not decide the point, a thousand texts, as strong as language could make them, would speak in vain.

I should be sorry to question the sincere piety of the writer, but I am not sure that it is strictly Christian piety; I mean the piety exemplified in the writings of the Apostles. There was piety before the Christian dispensation existed; there may, by parity of reason, be piety now, where the Christian dispensation is imperfectly apprehended,

or even greatly misunderstood. But, Apostolic piety must be sustained by Apostolic principles; if any of these be wanting, the result must be defective; if they be misconceived, the result, I conceive, will be vitiated in proportion to the misconception. I believe the distinct, simple, and cordial acknowledgment of three Divine Persons in the essential Godhead, lies at the very bottom of those principles; and I cannot help thinking that, even in persons of the very best intentions, error, or even obscurity, in this point of faith, has uniformly affected the tone of their devotion.

The facts of Christianity fully, simply, and humbly apprehended, through that quickening as well as illuminating light, which He who commanded the light to shine out of darkness communicates to the heart, are the sustenance, as well as subject-matter, of devotion: of those facts, the God, with whom we have to do, is the supreme. Devotion in exercise, is converse with Him. But in order to converse with God, we must have just views of God; and we can have just views of God, only so far as we receive, humbly and implicitly, his own manifestations of Himself. This will be the case wherever a sound understanding is in due subordination to an upright and faithful heart. And then, devotion in all its exercises will be,\* in some sort, a natural habit; prayer, especially, will be the inner sanctuary of the soul, in which, regarding God,—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,—with childlike simplicity, it adores each, and

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\* I mean, because it then employs the whole mind in its natural order.

it adores the essentially united Three. Its thought may fix on either, without jealousy of doing wrong to the others; and its love, when really spiritual and divine, so instinctively, as it were, embraces them in one comprehensive exercise, as to make the Divine unity a matter of spiritual feeling. I do not mean to speak mystically; I mean simply to express what I think is uniformly exemplified in the Apostolic writings, and is discernible in all the subsequent luminaries of the Catholic Church. By this sublime simplicity of apprehension, the piety of the faithful has been kept pure, and elevated, and effective; and through God manifested in the flesh, they continually have had access by one spirit unto the Father.

But where this Catholic and Apostolic simplicity is vitiated by obtrusive and sophistical opinions, the exercise of prayer must necessarily suffer the first injurious influence. Presumptuous speculations on the Divine nature, must affect the mental contemplation of that nature. They must mingle themselves with all acts of devotion, and make that, which ought to be the repose and solace of the heart, the chief scene of its perturbation.

It would be well if the individuals most concerned were necessarily conscious of this inward disorder. But, in what concerns our mind, we are liable to endless self-impositions. Besides, in such a case there may be no corrective standard whereto to recur; as, possibly, true Christian devotion may at no time have been possessed. Of such devotion, I humbly conceive, the root is



moral. But I am not sure that the language of the person, whose letter has been sent you, affords any evidence of strictly moral affection. It seems to be to a love of something called the truth, rather than to a love of God in himself, to which she professes to be brought. I can therefore understand, that even the falsest views of God should not consciously disturb a mind which takes truth as its chief object, and supposes those views to be truth.

My dear Madam, believe me

Most truly yours,

ALEXANDER KNOX.

ANSWER TO A LETTER, EXPRESSING A DOUBT WHETHER THE PROMISES WHICH RELATE TO THE FUTURE STATE OF GLORY AND BLESSEDNESS AWAITING THE SAINTS IN HEAVEN, ARE TO BE LITERALLY FULFILLED; AND WHETHER HEAVEN WILL BE THAT STATE OF UNMINGLED FELICITY WHICH WE ARE LED TO EXPECT.

MY DEAR SIR,

You were perfectly right in supposing that the tract on the Lord's Supper was sent by me. I was desirous to bring myself to your recollection, and I thought it possible that you might not disapprove of the attempt I had made to bring again into view the old Catholic doctrine, as retained in our own established formulary. I need hardly assure you, that your agreement with me gratifies me sincerely.

The latter part of your letter has engaged my serious thoughts. The doubt you have mentioned was new to me; but it appeared to call for close consideration. I think, however, it admits of a completely satisfactory answer.

It is certainly true, that the realities of life are often at seeming variance with the promises of the Gospel; but I apprehend that this is the case only when particular promises are separately regarded, and those qualifications which the Gospel itself affords are not sufficiently kept in view. When

the whole New Testament is considered in connexion, and due attention given to the illustrative cases as well as to the verbal declaration, I cannot but think that we shall find the most perfect agreement with all that has been since experienced in the Christian world.

Promises of temporal good, in the New Testament, are in general made with express limitation; and it is every where implied, that their fulfilment is to be regulated by its consistency with our spiritual and eternal interests. We are uniformly assured, that God doth “not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men;” and yet we see St. Paul beseeching the Lord thrice that an affliction might depart from him; and after all, receiving only an assurance of sufficient grace, but not of specific deliverance. I cannot but consider this case of St. Paul as replete with instruction to all Christians, in all ages. It clearly and forcibly teaches, that we may rely upon God for grace to sustain and improve our lot in life; but that the ordering of our circumstances must be left implicitly to the unerring wisdom of our heavenly Father.

The spiritual promises are made without limitation, but not without condition. They are made in terms the most exalted and extensive, but being made to free agents, actual fulfilment must ordinarily be in proportion to co-operation. Hence necessarily arises a variety of completion, which, though not intimated in the form of the promises (where such intimation would on many accounts have been unsuitable), is largely explained to



us by authentic exemplifications, particularly in St. Paul's Epistles.

If we look at the promises by themselves, we are distinctly warranted to conclude, that the state of a genuine and mature Christian is a perfect heaven upon earth. But when we attend to the various cases which St. Paul has either described or intimated, we clearly perceive, that even among those whom he praises for sincerity and zeal, he recognises but comparatively few instances of Christian maturity. The Corinthians were babes in Christ, and not spiritual, but carnal; the Colossians were in danger of being beguiled of their reward, by listening to false teachers; and the Hebrews, when for the time they ought to have been teachers, needed still to be taught the first principles of the oracles of God. In such as these, therefore, the spiritual promises of the Gospel could have but a partial and very imperfect fulfilment: and those happier persons who cordially aspired to the height of Christian beatitude, (and who seem to have been most numerous in Ephesus and Philippi,) can alone be regarded as really exemplifying the complete verification of the evangelical promises.

Here, therefore, I confidently think we have in the Scripture itself such a qualification of the spiritual promises of the Gospel, as reconciles all the seeming discrepancies in after times, between the letter of the promises and the manner of their fulfilment, however absolute the form of the promise: we see at once that it must be differently fulfilled in different characters, according to the

general rule, "to him that hath shall be given." And if such variety prevailed in the days of the Apostles, we cannot wonder that it should have continued in every succeeding age; and that we should witness it in our own. In fact, it would seem, that our actual experience of the realities of life differs little, if at all, from what was daily witnessed by the Apostles themselves. And, therefore, there is no need of any other qualification of the promises, than that which is inseparably connected with them in the Sacred Volume itself.

Had there been no persons whatever, in the successive ages of the Church, in whom the spiritual promises of the Gospel could be thought to have a full completion; I confess there would then, indeed, be more than a seeming variance between what had been promised, and what was really accomplished. But I am persuaded, that while, at all times, sincere Christians have far outnumbered mature Christians, in no age of the Church have the latter been wholly wanting; as far, then, as we can discover persons of this description, so far, I conceive, we may fairly expect to find a literal fulfilment of the spiritual promises. And however small the number of such happy instances may at any time be, they alone exemplify the high purpose for which the Gospel was given, and do more to elucidate its promises, than thousands of imperfect or carnal Christians can do to obscure them. It was to bring willing souls up to the highest degrees of spiritual blessedness, that those promises were expressed without qualification; and if only this effect has been realised in propor-

tion to fidelity and zeal in the pursuit, the unqualified truth of the promises is established, and "wisdom is justified of her children."

Such, then, is the view which I conceive must be taken of the promises of the New Testament, which regard our state of probation, not merely as they appear in their actual fulfilment, but as they are placed before us in the Sacred Volume. But I would ask, is there any thing in that infallible standard which similarly qualifies its prospects of the future life? It is, indeed, declared, and it is a merciful declaration, that as one star differeth from another star in glory, so shall it be in the resurrection of the dead; and they who build wood, hay, or stubble, upon the good foundation, shall be saved as through fire, as if escaping out of the burning of their own frail superstructure. Without such intimations as these, Christians of lower attainment could scarcely have dared to look forward to eternity. But, except in these gracious encouragements, the promises of a future life are wholly without qualification. That one expression, "the spirits of just men made perfect," opens a cloudless prospect; and wherever the subject is introduced, the view given is uniformly effulgent. St. Paul, who himself had been admitted to that mysterious world, while he shrinks from particular description, says enough in the 13th chapter of 1st Corinthians, and in the 4th and 5th chapters of 2nd Corinthians, to silence every doubt, and to warrant unutterable expectations.

Add to these, the brilliant pictures in the Apocalypse, particularly that in the end of the 7th



chapter: think, also, of those words of our Lord, "and he was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom;" and that answer to the prayer of the malefactor to be remembered by him when he came in his kingdom, "to-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise," clearly implying, that the being so, would satisfy the wish for everlasting peace and joy which had been just uttered.

I would also observe, that the spiritual promises in this life, if it only can be shewn that they have a substantial fulfilment, throw a most satisfying light on the happiness promised in the life to come. For the spiritual promises, in their literal completion, must imply a heaven upon earth. How much, for instance, is contained in that single expression, "the peace of God which passeth all understanding!" The troubles of the body were felt, perhaps peculiarly, by St. Paul. He even groaned, being burdened; but though his outward man was perishing, his inward man was renewed day by day. In what manner it was renewed, he explains to the Philippians, when he tells them that, by an initiation into the depth of Divine grace, he was able in every thing and in all things, both to be full, and to be hungry, to abound, and to suffer want; he could do all things through Christ that strengthened him. To be thus consciously superior to all the vicissitudes of earth, the seductive not less than the afflictive, from having within himself a strength not to be subdued, and a comfort not to be impaired through an inward union with the living fountain of all strength and all consolation, was to live already within the precincts

of heaven, and to anticipate the pleasures at God's right hand. Yet, assuredly, all this was nothing else than full-grown Christianity; and the Apostle appears thus to unbosom himself in the close of that most simply spiritual of all his Epistles, that he might give, not only to the Philippians, but to all Christians in every age, an unquestionable sample and standard of the sublimity of their vocation. In this richest effluence of the Apostle's own habitual feelings, we have, within the smallest possible compass, an essential fulfilment of all the spiritual promise in the Gospel. Their several rays meet here as in one luminous point, the brightness of which can only be exceeded by the consummate but strictly congenial glories of the everlasting kingdom.

As, therefore, sincere Christianity, in whatever degree, may be considered as a certain pledge; so such mature Christianity as that placed before the Philippians by St. Paul, contains in itself a specific earnest of future felicity. In this ripeness of grace there is the actual germ of the glory which is to be revealed; inasmuch as that enjoyment of God, which is the essence of eternal felicity, has so commenced as to satisfy the understanding, and to meet every native craving of the heart: there is, in fact, but one ardent desire to advance more and more into this inexhaustible fulness.

It is to these mature Christians who, as I already observed, have at no time been wholly wanting, and who, in numerous instances, "being dead, yet speak," that I am accustomed chiefly to go to take lessons from them on the nature of

true happiness, present and eternal. In later times, I find such examples generally in our own Church; but I cordially acknowledge one, at least, of this class among Dissenters; I mean the excellent Doddridge. The characters to which I refer have been spiritualists rather than theologists. If imbued with modern theology, they have either (as Doddridge) sat loose to it, or (as Leighton) risen fairly above the trammels which they had once borne. I must not multiply names: yet I cannot but specify Herbert, Taylor, and Kenn; each of these excellent persons (as well as Doddridge and Leighton, with the whole happy class who have been like minded) pursued religion not merely on account of the evils which it averts, but for the sake of the good, even the present good, which it confers: they felt the force of that admirable saying of St. Augustin, "*Fecisti nos tibi, et cor semper irrequietum donec requiescat in te.*" They were at the same time fully aware of the frailty of human nature, which they well knew could only be surmounted by the infused grace of God; and this they sought by daily and hourly prayer. But they were not less sensible of the capability of human nature; and they accordingly placed no narrow limits to their spiritual prospects even in this present world. The good things which they have brought forth out of the good treasure of their heart give ample evidence that they did not hope in vain.

From these men, then, I am able to take an estimate of spiritual peace here, and form a reckoning of consummate happiness hereafter. I con-



sider their records of themselves to afford the best and surest comment on the evangelical promises, both spiritual and eternal, because they aspired with peculiar ardour to the fulness of spiritual blessings; and while corporeally on earth, lived mentally in eternity. The more attentively I examine and compare these almost transparent characters, the more deeply I am satisfied that Christian piety is in them an anticipatory Paradise; and had I no other ground, I must, in all reason, conclude, from such blessed first fruits, that the full harvest will be replete with happiness and glory.

Had the religious feelings of those persons been ecstatic and impassioned, I could never think of making them the ground of an argument. The comforts which are derived from supposed manifestations, rapturous impressions, or inward assurances, may, most safely, not be rejected by wholesale; but, whatever certainty may be felt by the immediate subject of them to others, they afford no rational satisfaction. It is the solid rationality of those good men's happiness in religion, which justifies our estimation, and warrants our reliance. The uniform principles which animated their virtues, and established their hearts and minds, are, in their own way, as demonstrable as mathematical truths. We see every ingredient of moral happiness for which ancient philosophy panted: and its brightest visions realised through means which human reason never could have anticipated, but which prove themselves, by their effects, to be, as St. Paul has expressed it, "the power of

God and the wisdom of God." In a word, we behold those persons, under the quickening and sublimating influences of the Christian dispensation, deriving, from a commerce of heart with the Infinite Good, such a knowledge of him, such a likeness to him, and such a delight in him, as can only differ in degree, but cannot possibly differ in nature, from the perfect fruition of him in the eternal kingdom. It cannot, I say, differ from this in nature; for nothing more excellent in its nature, than the complacential and assimilating love of God, can possibly be conceived. But it is also true, that he who is vitally imbued with this love here, must proportionally advance in it hereafter; because love being once kindled, fuller knowledge must increase its ardour, as fresh fuel is sure to raise a thoroughly lighted fire.

I conclude then, on the whole, that there is one happiness for both worlds; namely, "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him:" and I equally rely on the uninterrupted growth and complete consummation of this divine principle, not merely on general grounds of reason and Scripture, but because it is expressly declared, that "the path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

I hope I have now said enough to establish the two points which I intended; namely, 1st. that the spiritual promises of the Gospel have been literally and completely fulfilled in such Christians as have given their whole hearts to that object, and (I would now add) who have not been impeded by some rooted error of judgment, or borne down

by some constitutional depression ; and, 2d. that the happiness attained and enjoyed by such mature Christians on earth gives decisive evidence of the consummate beatitude which awaits the righteous in a future world. But though I doubt not that you, my dear sir, are well acquainted with the excellent persons whom I have named, yet as you may not have thought of adverting to them in the precise point of view in which I have been contemplating them, I wish to illustrate my meaning by a very few of those expressions of feeling which their lives or writings afford us.

Herbert I must quote in the way of reference, rather than of transcription, as the matter he offers is copious, and I dare say you have his poems. His poem, entitled "the Pearl," I cannot but regard as one of the brightest exemplifications of "the faith that overcometh the world" that could be found in any human writer ; and you will observe how the concluding words bespeak a heart enjoying present access to the very essence of Heaven. You will find the same feeling labouring for utterance (as it were) in the conclusion of a poem, entitled "Prayer," which begins "Prayer, the Church's banquet." It is, in fact, the common character of those poems, that they express a delight in religion, as the only one solace of the human heart, and as a substantial anticipation of Heaven. But what most deserves remark is, that Herbert, on his death-bed, appears to regard his poems as mere descriptions of the struggles through which he had ascended to that more excellent Pisgah on which he then found himself. "Tell my dear brother, Farrer," said he,



“ that he will find in this little book a picture of the many spiritual conflicts that have passed betwixt God and my soul before I could subject mine to the will of Jesus my master, in whose service I have now found perfect freedom.” What, then, we may ask, was this perfect freedom which Herbert thus distinguishes from the bright beamings of spiritual happiness which had so signally irradiated the former advancing steps of his pilgrimage? Could it be less than a conscious fulfilment of all the spiritual promises, and an undelusive earnest and foretaste of unalloyed future felicity?

I have little of Bishop Kenn at this moment within my reach, but that little furnishes me with a passage strictly apposite to one of the points (indeed the chief one) on which your question about the future turns. He says, from the full feelings of his own heart (in a poem on “ The Divine Attribute of Truth ”)—

“ Thy promises of hearing prayer,  
Of pardon and paternal care,  
Of efficacious aids  
When hell our souls invades ;  
Of bliss ecstatic, unconfined,  
Of thy good spirit templing in the mind,  
They all infallibly are true ;  
All are perform'd in season due :  
My God much sooner I  
My thinking would deny,  
Than of thy glorious promise doubt—  
The steady anchor of a soul devout.”

Taylor, in a peculiar degree, aimed at advanc-

ing to the very gate of heaven; and, indeed, he appears, perhaps as much as was compatible with mortality, to have drawn empyreal air! In one of his letters to Mr. Evelyn, he gives free scope to the aspirings of his winged soul; in a manner, however, which is as sober as it is sublime.

“I long, sir,” he says, “to come to converse with you; for I promise to myself, that I may receive from you an excellent account of your progression in religion; and that you are entered into the experimental and secret way of it, which is that state of excellency, whither good persons are to arrive after a state of repentance and caution: my retirement in this solitary place hath been, I hope, of some advantage to me, as to this state of religion; in which I am yet but a novice; but, by the goodness of God, I see fine things before me whither I am contending. It is a great, but a good work; and I beg of you to assist me by your prayers, that I may arrive at that height of love and union with God, which is given to all those souls who are very dear to God.”

Such were the feelings of Taylor, while he was living in privacy, before the Restoration. Shortly after that event he was made Bishop of Down and Connor, an Irish privy counsellor, and chancellor of the university of Dublin. But, as he had known “how to be abased,” he appears to have equally known “how to be exalted;” for, in a sermon preached before the university in the year 1662, he expresses, it would almost seem with increased energy, but in a manner suited to the occasion, the same elevated views of religion which had en-

gaged and supported him under his outward depressions.

“ There is,” says he, “ a sort of God’s dear servants who walk in perfectness ; who perfect holiness in the fear of God ; and they have a degree of charity and divine knowledge more than we can discourse of, and more certain than the demonstration of geometry ; brighter than the sun, and indeficient as the light of heaven. These are the friends of God, and they best know God’s mind ; and they only that are so, know how much such men do know ; — they have a special unction from above.”

These deep words maintaining, in the sunshine of prosperity, the extent and fulness of his highest and holiest aim in the day of adversity, make Taylor a witness to the spirit and import of the Christian religion, above thousands who have contented themselves with lower attainments. He who, after such aspirations as those first quoted, utters such expressions as in the latter quotation, may be regarded as, in mind and spirit, already within the verge of heaven ; and, as if like Joshua and Caleb in the wilderness, presenting to view some of the actual fruits of the good land, that he might, thereby, establish hope, and cherish a congenial disposition accordingly, he proceeds — “ So that you are now come to the top of all. This is the highest round of the ladder, and the angels stand upon it ; they dwell in love and contemplation ; they worship and obey, but dispute not ; and our quarrels and impertinent wranglings about religion are nothing else but the want of the mea-



tures of this state,—our light is like a candle,—every wind of vain doctrine blows it out, or spends the wax, and makes the light tremulous; but the lights of heaven are fixed and bright, and shine for ever.”

In these last sentences it would really seem that Taylor considered the state of mature Christians to be virtually identical with that of the angels; that is, that the former being assimilated to the latter in disposition and temper, were in some sort associated with them in mental tranquillity and spiritual enjoyment. Comparing the latter words with the former part of the paragraph, it is thus that we must understand him; and he still more directly fixes his meaning, by saying that quarrels and impertinent wranglings about religion are nothing else but the want of the measures of this state; which want, however, is evidently supplied in his mature Christians, “who,” as he says, “have a degree of clarity brighter than the sun, and indeficient as the light of heaven.” These happy persons, therefore, in his view, are angels by anticipation; and, from what passes in the secret of their hearts, are qualified to give us an authentic account of the kind of happiness which is enjoyed by the spirits of the just made perfect.

I reflect with comfort, that the kind of testimony which I have exemplified might be produced from a great number of witnesses, who speak, from one common feeling, a language as rational as it is sublime. It is, therefore, as I said, from these full-grown Christians, rather than from babes in Christ, that we can form a just estimate of Christian hap-

piness even in this lower world ; and what I see so solidly substantiated *here*, assures me, beyond possibility of doubt, that the felicity of the future world is perfect and ineffable. I have only room to add, that if I have said any thing satisfactory, it will give heartfelt pleasure to,

My dear Sir,

Your truly faithful and obliged

ALEXANDER KNOX.

September, 1825.

LETTER TO THE REV. JAMES J. HORNBY, ON SOME  
PASSAGES IN THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

MY DEAR SIR,

Bellevûe, Feb. 1828.

HAVING completed my remarks on John Wesley, for whom I have had every reason to feel a deep affection, and whom I value on some accounts as much as in other instances I dissent from him, I turn my thoughts to subjects which you have brought before me in your highly estimated and most interesting letters.

You wish I should mark instances of that *cal-lida junctura* which I thought I found so frequently in the Epistle to the Romans. The first which strikes me is in the end of the first chapter, when St. Paul is about to turn professedly from the Gentiles to the Jews. I say *professedly*, for I am inclined to think that as soon as he commences his detail of purely moral vices, in the 29th verse, he had the Jews before him as really as the Gentiles. But it seems to me that he expressly turns to the former in the 32d verse, when he speaks of those who "know the judgments of God:" for he proceeds to descant on this aggravating circumstance in the 2d chapter, in terms applicable only to Jews; and he establishes this application in the



17th verse, by distinctly designating the personage whom he addresses.

The next instance is in the 28th verse of the same chapter, compared with the 1st verse of the 3d chapter. "He is not a Jew," he says, "who is one outwardly." On this assertion, precisely, the interrogatory with which the 3d chapter commences, appears to be founded; and this interrogatory he forthwith answers by specifying the peculiar blessing of the Jewish dispensation.

I am not sure that I find another instance before the conclusion of the 4th chapter, where it is said, that the faith which was imputed to Abraham for righteousness "shall be imputed to us also," if "we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead:" to which position the Apostle adds, "who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification;" thus laying his ground for the specific term which he was about to use; while the stress of the "therefore" (chapter v. verse 1) rests on the position itself, "to whom, also, it shall be imputed," &c.

I could wish to submit some thoughts on this last-mentioned passage, but I defer doing so until I have mentioned one or two other passages of like construction.

A remarkable prefatory intimation of the kind to which I alluded, occurs, I think, in the 14th verse of the 5th chapter, where Adam is said to be "a type of him who was to come," Τύπος τοῦ μέλλοντος, inasmuch as in all the following verses of the chapter, the *fons boni*, which was provided in our blessed Saviour, is opposed as an adequate and

even more than commensurate, remedy to the *fons mali* which was opened in the sin of Adam.

I said too hastily in all the following verses ; for I ought to have excepted the 20th verse, to which your attention has been already directed, and which I deem of peculiar importance, for this reason,—because it shews the admirable matter in the 6th chapter not to be, as Calvinists have supposed, a guard upon the general doctrine taught in the preceding chapters, but an actual continuation of the same profound discourse, only as being somewhat a new head linked to what had gone before, in a manner very usual with St. Paul; by an hypothetic objection, applying solely to the remark made, pertinently, no doubt, but as if without any particular design, in the 20th verse of the 5th chapter.

Several instances of the *callida junctura*, and some of them, I conceive, remarkably beautiful, might be pointed out in the 6th chapter, but they are not exactly of the kind which I had in view. That, therefore, which I would next mention (passing over the instance, Romans, vii. 6), is the immediate answer to the anxious inquiry, “ Who shall deliver me from the body of this death ? ” Which answer, whether it be, as in the *textus receptus*, or as Mr. Locke would read it, and the Vulgate actually has it, “ The grace of God through Jesus Christ ” our Lord, compendiously anticipates what is stated with luminous expansion in the first four verses of the 8th chapter.

I am not sure whether I might not find at least resembling instances in the following part of the Epistle ; but others, beside those which I have men-

tioned, are not present to my mind ; and, therefore, I am inclined to return to the passage on which I said I had some thoughts to offer. Their aim will be to explore the Apostle's comprehensive meaning ; and, if founded, they will restore to this link of the Apostle's discourse that original brightness which has not been brought out by the labour of common expositors.

I have said, the stress of the " therefore " rests on the position, " to whom, also, it shall be imputed," &c., and yet I conceive the expression *δικαιωθέντες ἐκ πίστεως* includes much more than that imputation. This term seems only to express the sure acceptance of every one, Jew or Gentile, who shall recognise the Divine power in the resurrection of Christ, as Abraham recognised the same power (illustrated by the starry heavens, to which his attention was directed), to give him a son against the course of nature. But, though such acceptance was sure to be followed by the special blessings of the Gospel, it was, itself, only introductory to their attainment. These blessings are accordingly intimated in the next verse, *ὅς παρεδόθη διὰ τὰ παράπτωματα ἡμῶν καὶ ἡγέρθη διὰ τὴν δικαίωσιν ἡμῶν*. That is, as I conceive, " who died, that, through the influence of his death, we might die to sin, and who rose again, that, through the influence of his resurrection, we might rise to a new life of righteousness."

To this latter blessing St. Paul eminently, but not exclusively, applies the term *δικαίωσις* ; for that in this idea he comprehends enfranchisement from the dominion of sin, which is, in fact, the negative



part of one and the same blessing, is clear from his words in the 7th verse of the sixth chapter, Ὁ ἀποθανὼν (σὺν Χριστῷ, as the next verse shews) δεδικαίωται ἀπὸ τῆς ἁμαρτίας, compared with the words immediately going before, and following after.

Laying, therefore, the different expressions of St. Paul together, I am obliged to conclude, that not only the λογισμὸς τῆς πίστεως εἰς δικαιοσύνην, but the δικαίωσις both negative and positive, (the σύμφυσις τῷ ὁμοίωματι τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ καὶ τῆς ἀνάστασεως, vi. 5.) is comprehended in the term δικαιοθέντες ἐκ πίστεως, (v. 1.) and it seems to me, that every other part of the Epistle, previous or subsequent, accords with, and contributes to justify, this conclusion.

I must not at present say any thing about the foregoing part of the Epistle, nor, indeed, much about the latter part — for it is a wide field; to be discussed, not in a letter, but a volume. I cannot help, however, directing your attention more particularly to that passage, already referred to (v. 14), which is introduced by declaring Adam to be τύπος τοῦ μέλλοντος.

You will observe, then (ver. 15), that after declaring the παράπτωμα to be no rule for limiting the χάρισμα, and thus intimating the justness of reasoning, *a fortiori*, from the one to the other, he uses this argument, that if the deadly effect of the fall was so widely experienced, the remedial blessing which Divine goodness has provided must be still more abundant in its counter-operation. But it is particularly to be noticed, that, in stating this conclusion, the Apostle begins to explain distinctly

what he had less directly, but significantly intimated in the preceding verse, πολλῶ μᾶλλον, he says, ἡ χάρις τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ ἡ δωρεὰ ἐν χάριτι, τῇ τοῦ ἐνὸς ἀνθρώπου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς τοὺς πολλοὺς ἐπερίσσευσε.

Now, in these words it is observable (though it escaped the notice of our translators), that the remedial blessing of the Gospel, here denominated ἡ δωρεὰ, is ascribed not only to that χάρις τοῦ Θεοῦ, in which it originated, but, as it were, to another χάρις, from which it more immediately proceeds; namely, “that of the one man, Jesus Christ.” This, however it may have been overlooked, is the obvious grammatical import of the expression; the article thus placed, always, as I conceive, expressing specification. And thus it is, that the εἰς ἀνθρώπου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, is most signally the ἀντί-τυπος of the εἰς ἀνθρώπου by whom sin entered into the world.

St. Paul himself appears to give the best possible paraphrase of ἡ χάρις τοῦ Θεοῦ in that expression, Titus, iii. 4. ἡ χρηστότης καὶ ἡ φιλανθρωπία τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Θεοῦ. Here, therefore, we have the disposition of the Divine nature towards us. But this disposition shews itself in a gift, that is, in something actually communicated; and of this communication the proximate source is the grace of the Second Adam.

What, then, is this grace? From the mere expression we might conclude, that it is a sanative influence from “the Word made flesh,” more than equal in potency to the vitiating influence from the first man. But the term is explained by our Redeemer’s own words to St. Paul, in answer to

his repeated prayer, that the bodily affliction which he suffered might depart from him — “My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness.” The grace of Christ, therefore, is the strength of Christ operative on the human mind, and enhanced by human impotency. And that selfsame thing which was to support St. Paul, is represented by the evangelist, St. John, as the essence of Christian beatitude; for, having declared the incarnate Word to be πλήρης χάριτος, he proceeds to shew that he was so, in order that he might “give gifts unto men,” καὶ ἐκ τοῦ πληρωματος αὐτοῦ ἡμεῖς πάντες ἐλάβομεν καὶ χάριν ἀντὶ χάριτος: teaching, I conceive, in these latter words, not only that his faithful disciples receive from him a general principle of grace, but, also, that every particular grace which was in him is communicated to them. I should think this construction of ἀντὶ is sufficiently supported by the passage in the Septuagint, quoted, St. Matthew, v. 38.

But, in order more exactly to apprehend the Apostle’s account of the remedial provision, it may be proper to go back to his statement of the evil. He tells us, that δι’ ἐνὸς ἀνθρώπου ἡ ἁμαρτία εἰς τὸν κόσμον εἰσῆλθε, καὶ διὰ τῆς ἁμαρτίας ὁ θάνατος, and so, he adds, εἰς πάντας ἀνθρώπους ὁ θάνατος διῆλθε ἐφ’ ᾧ πάντες ἥμαρτον. On these words I would first observe, that ἡ ἁμαρτία cannot here be used to express the criminal act of Adam, because it would be a gross solecism to say of any act, however atrocious in its character or destructive in its consequences, that it “entered into the world;” nor was any writer upon earth less capable than St. Paul of



such an incongruity in language. We must, therefore, understand ἡ ἁμαρτία to mean that to which alone the verb εἰσῆλθε would be suitable, namely, the principle of sin. Of this, when fully formed, the act was the natural fruit; and while the latter, like every other voluntary act, was, in itself, transitive, the principle which produced it was, in its nature, permanent and operative. To the sinful principle, therefore, the figurative language of the Apostle was most apposite: and with equal fitness he applies it also to that mortality which, although the result of a Divine decree, he contemplates as introduced by sin, in the same manner as sin had been admitted into the world by Adam.

In fact, it is remarkable that in this account of the great calamity, the Sovereign of the world does not come into view. The sole apparent actors, are Adam himself; and the two rhetorical personages, Sin and Death; the latter of whom obtained an universal range, because sin, once introduced, acquired an universal dominion, εἰς πάντας ἀνθρώπους ὁ θάνατος ἐνῆλθε, ἐφ' ᾧ πάντες ἡμάρτον. These last words expressly assign the reason of death's universal power. It, therefore, was not through the imputed guilt of Adam that all his posterity were condemned to death. Had such a notion been in the Apostle's mind, this, I conceive, was the proper place for declaring it. But nothing of the kind is so much as intimated. A perfectly different reason is given; because ἡ ἁμαρτία is universal, therefore ὁ θάνατος is also universal.

Such, then, is St. Paul's statement of man's misery, through the παράπτωμα of the first Adam;

and in the view which he has given, that misery consisted primarily and radically in sin; and derivatively, and as it were connaturally, in death. It was, moreover, for the express purpose of illustrating the divine remedy which he meant forthwith to explain, and was solicitous to exhibit in its truest light and fullest excellence, that he made that statement; and we, therefore, may conclude, first, that he omitted nothing which was essential to the subject; and, also, that he regarded the remedial blessing which he was about to develop, as in exact correspondence to the evil against which it was provided.

Of this remedial blessing, as has been said, the Apostle's general definition is *ἡ δωρεὰ ἐν χάριτι τῇ τοῦ ἐνδὸς ἀνθρώπου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ*. The sole question, then, is, in what does that "gift" consist? Were we left to make out the answer for ourselves, we could hardly be at a loss after such an account of the exigence. If the radical evil be the "reign of sin" (Rom. v. 21) in human nature, the "gift of grace," which is to meet that evil (as an antidote meets a poison), could be no other than an heavenly influence, adequate so to operate on human nature as to deliver it from its misery and thralldom. But we have no need to rest in inference, however inevitable. St. Paul, after having defined the blessing in general terms, and then mentioning, in the same comparative manner which he employs throughout the passage, as if to illustrate his assertion, *οὐχ ὡς τὸ παράπτωμα, οὕτω καὶ τὸ χάρισμα* (ver. 15); I say, after mentioning a signal enhancement (ver. 16), he proceeds to specify the nature of the



gift, introducing this important piece of instruction, as it were, by the way, while he is professedly arguing *a fortiori* the certainty of a beatific issue, *Εἰ γὰρ τῷ τοῦ ἐνὸς παραπτώματι ὁ θάνατος ἐβασίλευσε διὰ τοῦ ἐνὸς, πολλῶ μᾶλλον οἱ τὴν περισσεῖαν τῆς χάριτος καὶ τῆς δωρεᾶς τῆς δικαιοσύνης λαμβάνοντες ἐν ζωῇ βασιλεύσουσι διὰ τοῦ ἐνὸς Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ* (ver. 17).

The primary result, therefore, of the grace of "the one man, Jesus Christ," is, ἡ δωρεὰ τῆς δικαιοσύνης; that is, of a principle, the direct and natural antagonist of that principle by which man was enslaved and made miserable. If the dominion of sin was the source of his misery, it was the overthrow of that dominion, and the establishment of the reign of righteousness in its room; which alone could rescue man from wretchedness, and make him capable of enjoying either God or himself. To this conclusion, I conceive, we are brought by every expression which the Apostle has yet used. Are we shaken or confirmed in it by the sequel of the discourse?

One only objection can be made to the view which has been taken; namely, that righteousness, in this place, is not to be understood morally, but forensically; that it does not mean a principle of righteousness established in the heart, but an imputation of the Redeemer's all perfect righteousness; through which imputation we, however unrighteous in ourselves, are accounted righteous before God.

However easy it might be to refute this notion of righteousness from what has been already referred to, it is still easier to appeal to the Apostle's use of the term *δικαιοσύνη* in every instance in which



it occurs in the subsequent chapters. It is repeated in the last verse of the fifth chapter, evidently in the same sense as in the 17th verse; and so, I should think, as to bear no other than a moral construction. But some elucidation might be necessary, were it not made superfluous by what so speedily follows.

I have already observed, that in the 7th verse of the sixth chapter we have these words: *ὁ γὰρ ἀποθανὼν δέδικαίωται ἀπὸ τῆς ἁμαρτίας*. I would now add, that they contain an inference, expressed by the particle *γὰρ*, from what had just before been remarked, *ὅτι ὁ παλαιὸς ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος συνεσταυρώθη, ἵνα καταργηθῇ τὸ σῶμα τῆς ἁμαρτίας τοῦ μηκέτι δουλεύειν ἡμᾶς τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ*. Here, therefore, we have continued evidence of the sense in which St. Paul used the term *ἡ ἁμαρτία* in the preceding chapter, namely, in that of moral depravation; and, accordingly, he goes on so to use it, until, at length, we come to the 13th verse; where the Apostle again introduces the term *δικαιοσύνη* in such a way as places its moral import beyond the shadow of cavil; and, at the same time, the connexion of the verse with all which had gone before, evinces, that as *ἁμαρτία* is to be understood in the same moral sense, so the *δικαιοσύνη*, which is here self-evidently its moral opposite, is identical with that *δικαιοσύνη* which was the matter of the *δαρεὰ* in that same fifth chapter.

It is true, that St. Paul in his free, yet strictly managed, use of imagery, has, in the instance now before us, made the dominion of Sin give place to the dominion of God; and might, therefore, at first

view, be thought to express, by the term δικαιοσύνη, the practice by which God was to be served, rather than the essential principle in which his government consisted. But any such supposition is excluded in a following verse (vi. 18); where it is said, ἐλευθερωθέντες δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς ἁμαρτίας, ἐδουλώθητε τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ. Here, therefore, δικαιοσύνη is not merely the practice of what is right, but it is the very principle of rectitude, strictly opposed to the principle of sin; and, as it were, God's vicegerent, by which he exercises his dominion in the enfranchised mind and heart.

I would further observe, that if we connect this 18th verse with the words immediately preceding, we shall be satisfied that the enfranchisement here spoken of, is essentially the χάρισμα on which the Apostle had been dwelling. In the 16th verse, he introduces an expression not used before, ὑπακοὴ εἰς δικαιοσύνην. Εἰς in this place, as indeed throughout these two chapters (I am not aware of an exception), means *in order to*. What, therefore, this obedience is, which precedes δικαιοσύνη, we might be at some loss to discover, if St. Paul had not himself fixed its meaning by declaring twice, with marked significancy (Rom. i. 5; xvi. 26), that the Gospel was made known to all nations, εἰς ὑπακοὴν πίστεως.

Now, this ὑπακοὴ πίστεως, in its primary exercise, could be nothing else than the cordial reception of the Gospel, as the δύναμις Θεοῦ εἰς σωτηρίαν. For thus St. Paul forthwith explains the "obedience" of which he had spoken, by thanking God that the Roman Christians had obeyed from the heart the τύπος διδασχῆς εἰς ὃν, says he, παρεδόθητε. Dr. Doddridge



thinks there may be an allusion here to melted metal poured into a mould; and if so, the Apostle, doubtless, had in view the assimilating provision explained in the first eleven verses of this same sixth chapter. But, be that as it may (which, however, I should think highly probable), the Apostle attributes to that "obeying from the heart," the effect described in the words already quoted, *ἐλευθερωθέντες δὲ ἀπὸ ἁμαρτίας, ἐδουλώθητε τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ*.

In these words, then, we have the sense of both the leading terms in the preceding discourse incontestably determined. Sin, which had entered into the world by Adam, had brought mankind universally into the most degrading bondage; but, every one who cordially received the Gospel, and availed himself of its aids, emerged from the bondage of *ἁμαρτία*, and passed into the discipline of *δικαιοσύνη*. As, therefore, in St. Paul's view, man's subjection to the deadly dominion of sin through the *παράπτωμα* of Adam, constituted the essence of his misery; so his liberation from that dominion, and his being brought into the service of righteousness, was to form the foundation of his happiness. In exactly tracing St. Paul's reasoning from the 12th verse of the fifth chapter, to the 18th verse of the sixth chapter, we find it uniformly tending to such a result. And when, at length, this very result is expressly and simply stated as effected through the *ὑπακοή πίστεως*, and as substantiating the vital purpose of the Gospel, we cannot doubt our being in complete possession of the Apostle's doctrinal scheme. And if this conclusion could be made more certain, it would be confirmed by those cor-



responding words of our Lord, which contain the spirit of St. Paul's entire discourse, *πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν δοῦλος ἐστὶ τῆς ἁμαρτίας. εἰὰν ὁ υἱὸς ὑμῶν ἐλεύθερωση ὄντως ἐλευθεροί ἔσεσθε.*

I have confined myself to certain leading verses in the passage I have referred to (although every one of its successive sentences bears upon the same great subject, and is deserving of the deepest attention), because, to have entered further into the exposition of St. Paul's profound observations, and wonderfully significant expressions, would have carried me far beyond the limits of anything that could be called a letter, or, indeed, that I at present should be equal to.

LETTER TO MRS. HANNAH MORE, ON MR. SOUTHEY'S  
LIFE OF JOHN WESLEY.

MY DEAR MADAM, Bellevue, Delgany, 2d Oct. 1820.

I TRUST I need not assure you, that my long omission of writing has not proceeded from any diminution of affection, or from any want (latterly) of the sincerest solicitude ; of late, especially, we have thought, inquired, and often talked about you. Our common friend, Mr. Ogilvie, being here for some days, brought you still more frequently into conversation, as Mr. Jebb had also contributed to do just before. From both we heard, with deep concern, of your late painful and alarming illnesses ; but we had some little comfort from being also told that the severity of the last attack had in some measure subsided.

Still, I should not have thought of taxing your attention or strength with a letter, had I not learned, through my young friend, Richard Steele, that you have some wish to know what estimate I make of Southey's "Life of Wesley."

When that work was announced, I felt much more than curiosity : I could not hope that Mr. Southey would prove an adequate biographer. To make one such, it would be necessary to have all

John Wesley's piety and none of his weaknesses. But I had met several passages in the *Quarterly Review* relative to John Wesley, written, undoubtedly, by Mr. Southey, which expressed more kindly feelings toward John Wesley, and more enlarged views of his religious character and conduct, than I had found, at least, in any other recent instance. I hoped, therefore, that John Wesley would, in some respects, be fairly represented. I feared, however, that many things respecting him would be clumsily managed; both because they might be, in themselves, not a little unmanageable; and also, because Mr. Southey's acquaintance with the phenomena of the religious world could hardly be such as to qualify him for making those discriminations which the case might, in justice, require; or those allowances of which, in Christian candour, it might admit.

These anticipations have, on the whole, been pretty much realised. The work is, in great measure, what I expected. In some particulars it has given me more pain than I had reckoned upon; but I think it has given me more pleasure in some others.

I am, in the first place, glad that such a work is in existence. It was desirable that John Wesley should have his proportioned place in the records of his country; that he should be as conspicuous on the tablet of English history as he had been in real life, during more than one half of the eighteenth century. No party panegyrist, no obscure life-writer, could have effected this object. The season, also, for such a service, was quickly



passing by. In a few years, materials and elucidations, now to be obtained, might have existed no longer.

It was to be wished, then, that some competent person should undertake the task; some one, I mean, whose feelings would be interested by the subject, and yet who would be so untrammelled by party connexions, as to be determined at once to say all that was necessary, and nothing but what was true. In point of fact, I believe Mr. Southey possessed these qualifications more fully than, perhaps, any other who could be thought of for such a purpose. I am far from supposing that he possessed them absolutely: I mean, only comparatively. It is certain that he connected John Wesley and Methodism with the civil and moral interests of the country in a way neither narrow nor unfair; and, therefore, was prepared to estimate particular circumstances with less unfriendly prepossession than most who had heretofore adverted to the subject.

Mr. Southey accordingly acknowledges the deep necessity which existed, at the era of John Wesley's entrance on his career, for some means of rousing the English public from its religious torpor; and with whatever alloy he charges the religious spirit which John Wesley was the instrument of diffusing, he allows it to have been, in its substance, sincere and upright. He, therefore, regards John Wesley as a real, though not unqualified benefactor to his country; while, to countless individuals, he considers his teaching as a vehicle of the greatest blessing to be attained on earth.

To John Wesley's personal character, Mr. Southey does still ampler justice. I am even surprised at the happiness of the sketch in the first fifteen lines of the paragraph which begins on the 54th page of the 2d volume; indeed, the greater part of that 15th chapter gives so interesting a selection from John Wesley's journal, as almost to evince some natural congeniality between the mind which afforded, and the mind which culled out, such apt specimens of an amiable and highly gifted nature, as well as of ardent zeal and devoted piety.

But I am sorry to say, that the pleasure afforded by this and other similar passages, is grievously abated by the charge which Mr. Southey so strongly maintains, and so frequently repeats, of ambition and love of power being the secret spring of John Wesley's conduct, as the leader of a religious community.

This imputation is to me the greatest matter of annoyance in the whole work. Charges of credulity, precipitancy, or even fanaticism, do not necessarily affect the moral character. Be these weaknesses ever so palpable, the heart may, nevertheless, be upright toward both God and man. But systematic ambition is a poisonous worm at the root, whose influence must contaminate the whole of inward and outward life, principle, temper, intention, and action.

I deny not, that, on a superficial view, many parts of John Wesley's conduct might seem to evince a strongly ambitious mind; but Mr. Southey, as a philosopher, ought to have reflected, that, according to the laws of human nature, the vice which



he imputed was inconsistent with the virtues which he acknowledged. "No man can serve two masters," is not more the voice of incarnate wisdom than of experimental common sense; and it is no less certain, on the same ground of Divine authority and human experience, that "every one who practises sin is the slave of sin." Could John Wesley, then, have been absorbed in a passion, at once as selfish and as fascinating as any which actuates corrupt statesmen, or more corrupt demagogues, and yet enjoy a "cheerfulness" like "perpetual sunshine" (p. 54), from "the approbation of his own mind—the certainty that he was employed in doing good to his fellow-creatures, and the full persuasion that the Spirit of God was with him in his work?" Could this singular gaiety of conscience have so maintained itself except in the cloudless atmosphere of a pure heart? But, could such a thing be, if ambition ruled within? In this case, would even John Wesley's outward conduct have been "irresistibly winning?" Would not temper have been, at least sometimes, soured? Would not the opposition of refractory men, whom he himself had raised from the plough or the workshop to the power of annoying him, have galled his heart and clouded his brow? According to Mr. Southey himself, there was nothing of this kind. Yet, had power been his idol, could he have wholly wanted these symptoms; or, had they existed, could he have wholly suppressed them? Surely, if, in the moral as in the material world, the same fountain does not produce sweet water and bitter, no other ambition than that of doing



the greatest possible good, could coexist with the qualities to which Mr. Southey bears testimony.

I allow, however, that John Wesley had a certain love of power. He was, as Mr. Southey often observes, formed for power; and, a faculty eminently possessed cannot be exercised without pleasure. Had John Wesley, therefore, lost his power, he would possibly have felt himself less in his congenial element. But, there was no more moral evil in this natural relish than in a healthy person's liking to take his food. The highest natural pleasure in eating does not make a man an epicure, provided his palate be completely under his control so soon as the call of nature is satisfied; and if, in the intervals, he does not dwell upon his meals as ingredients in the happiness of his life. Just so, I conceive, John Wesley could not but feel pleasure in the exercise of that "dominion" which, as Mr. Southey says, he "had established for himself in the hearts of his followers;" but I am equally convinced, it was a pleasure of simple sensation, and not of ruminating reflection. I think I ought to argue thus, even from the premises which Mr. Southey has furnished; but, from my own close and impartial observation, I am persuaded, that John Wesley was as free from all really ambitious designs, contrivances, solitudes, and chagrins, as the child in the Gospel whom our Redeemer placed in the midst of his disciples as a model of humility.

Yet, as I have said, had Southey been a superficial thinker, or had he gone less deeply into the excellences of John Wesley's moral character, it

would have been natural for him to account, as he has done, for the continued intensity, and apparently deep laid policy, with which the Methodist society was both formed and conducted. But, competent as Mr. Southey was to look beyond appearances, and disposed to ascribe virtues to John Wesley incompatible with any gross inconsistency of principle or temper, he might have found, in the natural ardour of his constitution, in the singularly prompt acuteness of his intellect, in the uncommon combination of circumstances in which he was placed, and in the parental attachment he must have had to the community of which he conceived himself the providential guardian, as well as author, and which, to the last, he believed the most perfect practical institute in the Christian world; in these particulars, I say, Mr. Southey might have found sufficient explanation of John Wesley's most questionable movements, without the necessity of tarnishing his fame, or injuring the portrait which he himself, in executing it, seems to regard with liberal pleasure.

But, I am sorry to say, that, on another account, I have felt sincere regret in reading Mr. Southey's volumes: I mean, that he treats the objectionable features of Methodism rather with a half sceptical ridicule than with sober animadversion.

I am quite of opinion, that, in a history of Methodism, those embarrassing particulars could not have been left out. It was the duty of a faithful historian to speak of things as they were—nothing extenuating, nor setting down aught in malice. In truth, to have stated the virtues and benefits of



Methodism without its excesses, would have led, in after times, to false conclusions, and would have deprived posterity of, probably, some useful light for separating the pure substance of Christianity more and more from its drossy accompaniments.

I regret that Mr. Southey did not accommodate his remarks sufficiently to this valuable purpose; but, on the contrary, seems to take wayward pleasure in shewing off the annoying spectacles of fermentitious religion. There is a lightness in his expressions, which may lead his readers to confound the substance of religion with those abuses of it which he exposes. In order to have treated this part of the subject usefully, or even safely, he needed a far deeper acquaintance, both with Christianity itself, and with its interior history, through successive ages, than he appears to possess. It is the profoundly pious and thoroughly well-informed Christian alone, who can draw the line accurately between intelligible religious affection, and unintelligible religious insanity.

In fact, no topic is more difficult, or more delicate, than that of religious enthusiasm. In order to understand it, we should need a deeper insight than, perhaps, has been yet attained, into both corporeal and mental physiology. We should, probably, then perceive, that human nature, by its very construction, is liable to be agitated by nothing so much as by an apprehension of the great facts of religion, proportioned to their awful moment. — He, therefore, who speaks under the influence of such an apprehension, will naturally excite, in susceptible hearers, a sympathy with



what he himself feels ; and if he gives himself unreservedly to his own impetuous passions ; if (instead of imitating the Living Wisdom from above, who taught as men “ were able to bear it ”) he sets himself to excite the strongest possible terrors and the strongest possible joys, discarding reason in himself, and trampling it down in his hearers, it is impossible to limit the pitch to which religious agitation may be carried, both in mind and body. Temporary or even lasting madness, swoons, convulsions, catalepsies, every thing which is terrific or revolting, in intellect or frame, may be justly dreaded. Religious passions will produce all the effects of other passions, when equally roused ; but with this difference, that in the case of religious passions, the mind peculiarly wants power of correcting its own extravagancies ; and there is a constancy of stimulus which nothing earthly could furnish. On these principles, I conceive, we might account for most of the phenomena which attended commencing Methodism. Mr. Southey sees them pretty much in the same light, and his strictures might have been useful, had they been in the spirit of a Christian philosopher, rather than in that of a Lucian, or a Conyers Middleton. There can be no doubt that it was the express object, both of John Wesley and George Whitfield, in those first days of their career, to raise the religious passions to their utmost height. They deemed the more tranquil movements of the mind to be utterly disproportioned to the object ; they, perhaps, apprehended much more impediment than aid from unimpas-

sioned reason, and therefore wished, rather than feared, that every calm and sober faculty should, for the time, be superseded. Who can wonder, then, at the results? They might have been much more tremendous, if the two principal agents had not been as pure in purpose as they were erroneous in method. How far their views of doctrinal truth contributed, first to heighten their own passions, and then those of their hearers, I will not venture to inquire; I will only express my persuasion, that if John Wesley had preached in those early days, as he did during the last twenty years of his life, there, probably, would not have been room for recording a single instance of impassioned violence.

I cannot but think, therefore, that Mr. Southey has not enough brought forward the increased cheerfulness and amenity of John Wesley's later views, while he gives rather superfluous prominence to those earlier excesses: why, for instance, should he have copied Mr. Wesley's more than questionable insertion in his *Journal* of the "Strange Occurrences at Everton," (vol. ii. p. 319, &c.) This relation, I conceive, is more revolting than any thing in John Wesley's own case; and if it could not be proved that such disorder of mind and body was uncongenial with Christian piety, or rather, indeed, perfectly opposite to its serene and tranquil spirit, an argument would be afforded to unbelievers, infinitely stronger than any they ever have produced, or ever shall. This narrative, besides, had little to do with John Wesley, except that it had been admitted into his journal; and to

punish this indiscretion by a needless re-exposure, scarcely accorded with the esteem which Mr. Southey professes for his hero.

It would have been in itself desirable that John Wesley's own course of conduct could have been given without the intermixture of similar alloy, but, as I have already observed, it may far more serve the purposes of mysterious Providence that posterity should see him as he was. The piety of John Wesley was much more than sincere; it was ardent, pure, and sublime. But, perhaps, in no instance has so much sterling goodness been accompanied with so much intellectual and circumstantial error. In heart and temper, he was a man of the first order; in mental taste and literary accomplishments, he stood far above the ordinary level; his views of moral rectitude, and of that "purity of heart" which "shall see God," were scarcely to be heightened by his entrance into Paradise. But, where comprehensive judgment and long-sighted sagacity were to be exercised, John Wesley was a child. He was a master of technical logic; and he seems to have mistaken this for philosophy (the science of cause and effect), of which, except in gleams, at some few happier moments, he knew little or nothing through life. He was unsuspecting, in spite of common sense. He hated to anticipate disagreeable probabilities; and, wherever present appearances were favourable, his sanguine mind rushed from the most illusive premises to confident conclusions. All these tendencies were increased by his notion of the Divine operations, both in providence and in grace. These, in his view, were



so immediate and palpable, that he was liable continually to deem little occurrences miraculous, and animal emotions divine. In every thing, therefore, but his moral conscience, John Wesley was even exposed to be the dupe of present circumstances; and it, perhaps, might be justly wondered at, that, being on the whole what he was, his blemishes of character and errors of conduct were not greater. My persuasion is, that the unseen hand in which he so sincerely trusted, suffered him to err only so far as would subserve the ulterior purposes of unfathomable Providence.

In giving a statement of John Wesley's doctrine, I think Mr. Southey particularly defective; he did not sufficiently trace the course of thought which runs through the series of John Wesley's Works, and has, therefore, overlooked certain remarkable revolutions of mind, the close examination of which might be both curious and useful. Certain it is, that John Wesley's latter views were perfectly free from every gloomy sentiment and every rigid position; nor do I think that a more just or more delightful idea of matured piety could easily be found, than that which is given in some of his latest sermons.

Mr. Southey seems to me to have gone particularly beyond his depth, when he so severely censures John Wesley's doctrine of Christian perfection. That, at one time, both the Wesleys had talked extravagantly on this subject, is certain; and, on the point of sudden attainment, John Wesley was excessive through life, though a good deal less so toward the close. But his mature estimate of

the state of mind itself, was, substantially, no higher than what had been taught by celebrated divines of the Established Church :\* my doubt has been, whether, at length, John Wesley was not content with too low a standard ; be that as it may, I am sure he would have urged nothing more than is contained in the two last paragraphs of your excellent thoughts on “ Christianity a Religion of Love.” Were the good old man now living, I am persuaded he would say, “ this passage gives exactly my view.”

You, in truth, have there placed before your readers the maturest fruit on this earth of our holy religion, the real cure of human nature, the true and only rest of their heart ; I can wish nothing better for myself, for you, my dear madam, and for all whom we jointly and severally love, than that those words of yours may be fulfilled in our hearts and lives ; especially, that we may feel an “ increasing desire of conformity to our Divine Saviour, and such a growth in grace, that to will and to do, may almost become the same thing.”

Thus, my dear madam, in remarking upon perhaps one of the very best things in John Wesley, you yourself have been brought into the review, with whom (having done with my good old friend) I am now only concerned. Since I begun to write, Mrs. La Touche and myself have been sincerely gratified by a letter to her from Mr. Ogilvie, giving an account of greater amendment than he could

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\* For example, Herbert, Jeremy Taylor, Cudworth, Worthington. Lucas, &c.

have hoped to find. May his further expectations concerning you be realised as long as will be best for yourself; may you be permitted to give comfort to your friends; and may the remainder of your path be eminently “as the shining light which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”

I trust what I have written may reach you at a moment when it will not be painful to you to attend to it. If any effort of mine could afford you the smallest pleasure, it would gratify beyond expression, my dear madam,

Your cordially attached

and ever grateful Friend,

ALEXANDER KNOX.

P.S. I have forgot to say, that I blame Mr. Wesley's conduct respecting the Church of England, toward the close of his life at least, as much as Mr. Southey himself; yet, sure I am, the poor old man was utterly unconscious of duplicity or prevarication. If Mr. Southey had known as much of those transactions as even I happened to do, he would as much as ever have condemned the conduct; but he would have pitied the otherwise venerable person who was thus mysteriously permitted to be the dupe of his own weakness, and of other men's arts.

October 3d.



LETTER TO MRS. HANNAH MORE, ON THE  
CHARACTER OF JOHN WESLEY.

MY DEAR MADAM,

I, at length, avail myself of the encouragement given me by our friend, the Bishop of Limerick, that to receive a letter from me, would not tax your strength beyond ease and safety. During much of the time subsequent to my receiving your most kind letter of July the 10th, 1823, I was obliged to give up all writing which required the use of the eye; and, I believe, nine months elapsed before I could venture to do more than what the hand could accomplish without the exact guidance of sight. I have great reason to be thankful, that I am not now under the same restraint, though I am warned, by constant sense of weakness, and, occasionally, of uneasiness, that I must cautiously use the present power. It is only one of my eyes which is affected; and I have the comfort of thinking that there is no organic malady, but that it is one of the various ways in which a volant principle of constitutional indisposition has been disporting itself, and disciplining me for more than the last fifty years. It is a great mercy that those varieties have not come together, but suc-

ceed each other ; and hitherto, as I advance in life, they are more and more gentle. What my life would have been without them, I might say without the severest of them, even now, I could not conjecture without terror ; and, therefore, in the retrospect of my most painful restraints and corrections, in sober reason I must say, that, in this respect peculiarly, as well as in so many others, “ goodness and mercy have followed me all my days.”

I need not assure you of the pleasure I felt in your approbation of my remarks on the review of John Wesley's Life. My personal knowledge of him enabled me to speak positively ; and my feelings respecting him naturally led me to say what I knew with cordial warmth. But, beyond all this, I deliberately consider John Wesley to have been one of the most remarkable instruments of Providence since the days of the Apostles. His own followers, however, seem to me to be almost as little capable of doing him justice as Mr. Southey himself. They estimate him (or at least appear to do so) by the work he did in founding and organising their body. That this was a part of his providential destiny, I do not dispute ; for, if he had not had such a platform to stand upon, he never could have acted the part he did for more than half a century ; nor have left that conspicuous and now imperishable light behind him, which, in my opinion, did not reach its highest clearness until about thirty years after the commencement of his singular career ; nor, I should think, could he ever have attained those more enlarged views which latterly opened on him, had he been pursuing his

labours in a less extensive or less multifarious field of action. It is possible, besides, that the community which he formed may yet be made to serve some important purpose, though, in what way, I feel myself at a loss to conjecture. It seems to me, that, though as a sect they are respectable, their spirit appears to be less and less congenial to the spirit of their founder, and that they are, not gradually, but, as far as they are able, with rapid steps, advancing toward and coalescing with that great world from which it was his living and dying anxiety to keep them at a distance. What this new alliance will lead them to, time will shew; but one feature in their system I think of with some interest, namely, that they still retain, in some measure, the Church-of-England Liturgy. Is it not a fact worthy of attention, that this form of public devotion, which, once, so many resigned their places in the Church rather than adopt, should now, in substance, be retained by so large a body, who have it in their power, and in whom it would have been perfectly consistent, at once to relinquish it?

But, it is in his individual capacity that I like to contemplate John Wesley. The parts of his character which chiefly interest me, seem, at this day, to be overlooked by those who bear his name—the union of depth and cheerfulness which Christian piety exhibits, as it is represented in his later writings, and illustrated, in no small measure, by his own example, is one of the chief things for which I value him. It was his great object to demonstrate to the mind and heart, that true



religion is the present, not less than the everlasting, happiness of man. He inexpressibly felt, and he was anxious to make every one else feel, that it was this

“ Liberty, alone,  
That gives fresh beauty to the sun,  
That bids all nature look more gay,  
And lovely life with pleasure steal away.”

But, it is not enough to speak thus of John Wesley. To prove the justness of what I ascribe to him, I must make him speak for himself. I dare say you have looked into his writings; but I should not wonder if you met something which soon led you to lay down the book. In circumstantial matters, I conceive him beset with errors, though not uniformly with the same errors through life; but, in essential matters, and especially respecting

“ The sacred and homefelt delight,  
The sober certainty of waking bliss,”

which true Christian piety implies, he, from time to time, sent forth the brightest coruscations of practical truth.

Thus, for example, in his sermon on “ The important Question,” after saying many excellent things in his own peculiar manner, and some strange ones, and after observing, that, if even a life of religion were a life of pain, and a life of sin a life of pleasure, and that this pleasure were sure to last for a number of years, still the preference of the latter to the former would be the most egregious folly,—he winds up his subject in the following words:—

“ But it has been proved, that the case is quite

otherwise ; that religion is happiness, that wickedness is misery, and that no man is assured of living threescore days ; and if so, is there any fool, any madman under heaven, who can be compared to him that casts away his own soul, though it were to gain the whole world ? For, what is the real state of the case ? what is the choice which God proposes to his creatures ?—It is not, will you be happy for threescore years, and then miserable for ever ; or will you be miserable threescore years, and then happy for ever ? It is not, will you have first a temporary heaven, and then hell eternal ? or will you have first a temporary hell, and then heaven eternal ? But it is simply this, will you be miserable threescore years, and miserable ever after ? or will you be happy threescore years, and happy ever after ? Will you have a foretaste of heaven now, and then heaven for ever ? or will you have a foretaste of hell now, and then hell for ever ? Will you have two hells, or two heavens ?”

I must give another specimen of John Wesley’s luminous views ; but I should not give it fairly, if I did not transcribe the passage at large. It occurs in a sermon entitled “ The more excellent Way.” He is speaking on the subject of amusements ; some he rejects as wholly unworthy, not merely of religious persons, but of rational beings. Of certain others, he expresses himself more gently, but still with disapprobation. For instance, “ Of playing at cards, I,” he says, “ could not do it with a clear conscience ; but I pass no sentence on those who are otherwise minded : I leave them to their own Master ; to him let them stand or fall.”

“ But,” he proceeds, “ are there not more excellent ways of diverting themselves for those that love or fear God ? Would men of fortune divert themselves in the open air ? They may do it by cultivating and improving their lands, by planting their grounds, by laying out, carrying on, and perfecting their gardens and orchards. At other times, they may visit and converse with the most serious and sensible of their neighbours ; or they may visit the sick, the poor, the widows, and fatherless, in their affliction. Do they desire to divert themselves in the house ? They may read useful history, pious and elegant poetry, or the several branches of natural philosophy : if you have time, you may divert yourself by music, and, perhaps, by philosophical experiments.”

Thus far, there is nothing said but what might be expected from any mind at once pious and enlightened. But, I hardly think any preacher of his time, except John Wesley himself, would have thought of adding to a catalogue even of such recreations, as that which was to crown and perfect all the rest, what he immediately subjoins, as if from the fulness of his own vivid and happy feeling ; “ But, above all, when you have once learned the use of prayer, you will find, that as

‘ That which yields, or fills

All space, th’ ambient air, wide interfus’d,

Embraces round this florid earth,’

so will this ; till, through every space of life, it be interfused with all your employments, and wherever you are, and whatever you do, embrace you on every side. Then you will be able to say boldly,



‘ With me no melancholy void,  
No moment lingers unemploy’d,  
Or unimprov’d below ;  
My weariness of life is gone,  
Who live to serve my God alone,  
And only Jesus know.’ ”

The ending of this passage, in his own peculiar manner, with a stanza from one of his brother's hymns (even in which, however, there is something very noble), cannot, I think, hinder us from admiring its peculiar spirit and beauty. His poetical quotation (which I do not remember to have met with elsewhere) seems to me exquisitely to illustrate what he wishes to describe, and even every epithet has a happy effect for his purpose. Perhaps I am partial ; but this little effusion coming in as it does (the very idea of other rational pleasures leading his heart at once, as if without reflection, and above resistance, to the one ineffable pleasure), strikes me as the most *riant* picture of Christian devotion I ever met with, except in the Sacred Volume. Doddridge's well-known epigram is very fine, and does true honour to its author. But the idea of prayer as an omnipresent pleasure, yet never impeding, but gently leaving room for, and indescribably animating, every other pure and natural pleasure, is here, to my mind, so well conveyed, that, for this one passage, I should deem John Wesley worthy of everlasting remembrance.

But I must give you one more specimen of this interesting man, to which I shall not wonder if you attach still greater moment. To speak, however, sublimely, is an infinitely less thing than

to contemplate death with an established mind. But, where this latter is realised, what had been well spoken comes with complete force ; I will, therefore, transcribe one of John Wesley's last letters to myself, which, while it is strongly marked with some of his amiable singularities, impressively manifests the feelings with which he regarded his approaching change. It was written a short time after his last arrival in Ireland :—

“ MY DEAR ALLECK,

“ Dublin, April 11th, 1789.

“ You see in the public papers that I shall be with you, if God permits, on the thirtieth of the next month. If I should be called to go a longer journey before that time, I hope you would be able to say, ‘ Good is the will of the Lord.’ Every time we meet, it is less and less probable that we should meet again in this world. But it is enough, if we are counted worthy of that world, and the resurrection of the dead. Oh ! let my dear Sally Knox think of this, for we know not how soon she may be called. Certainly I love her dearly ; and shall be glad to meet her at our Lord's right hand. Peace be with all your spirits !

“ I am, my dear ALLECK,

“ Yours most affectionately,

“ JOHN WESLEY.”

I have omitted no part of this letter, because I think the expression of personal attachment to my sister, with which it concludes, immediately subjoined to, and so emphatically connected with, the solemn matter which had gone before, is as characteristical of the writer as any thing which could be produced. My poor sister at that time

made no pretensions whatever to religious strictness: but he had known her from a child, and had taken a particular liking to her lively manner, and very pleasing appearance. John Wesley's inexpressible nature inclined him to conceive such attachments, and the childlike innocence of his heart disposed him to express them with the most amiable simplicity. The gaiety of his nature was so undiminished in its substance, while it was divinely disciplined in its movements, that to the latest hour of his life there was nothing innocently pleasant with which he was not pleased, and nothing naturally lovely which in its due proportion he was not ready to love. To interesting females, especially, this affection continually shewed itself: of its nature and kind, what he says of my sister gives a striking manifestation. The closest view of another world increases, instead of abating its warmth, and raises it into a holy solicitude which I am happy to think has not been disappointed. She survived Mr. Wesley about ten years, but shewed nothing correspondent to his wish until within a month or two of her death. Then, without any apparent cause, except the grace of God concurring with her rapid decline, all her dispositions were so altered, as to make the last weeks of her life a continued exercise of joyful hope and pious resignation.

Thus, my dear madam, as you were pleased with my more general remarks on John Wesley's character, I have wished, as far as possible, to make you partake in my closer observation of him and nearer acquaintance with him. I only hope, that



the particulars I have brought before you may prove in some degree interesting, or, at least, not tiresome.

I will now only add, that Mr. and Mrs. ——— have been here for a fortnight. They came from South Wales to Ireland, to have once more the pleasure of seeing Mr. and Mrs. ———; and seldom, in this world, has such an exercise of kindness been requited with greater mutual satisfaction and pleasure; in which, I myself have most cordially participated. They are an amiable and estimable pair; and sincerely as I was interested for them, when I had the pleasure of being with them in this house before, my value and regard for them have got a strength and warmth by this renewal of intercourse, which it is peculiarly delightful to derive from a second meeting, after a long interval, in so changeful a state of things. The pleasure felt in such a case seems greatly akin to the immutable satisfactions of a future life.

I need not take off my pen to ask your friends of this house, whether I shall express (what in truth I could not express) their deep love to you, and never-ceasing solicitude for your comfort and happiness. Their feelings could not be overstated; and I trust you will believe that they are emulated, if not equalled, by the affection and gratitude of, my dear madam,

Your ever faithful

And attached Friend,

ALEXANDER KNOX.

Bellevue, Delgany, Oct. 10, 1824.

## LETTER TO DR. ADAM CLARKE.

MY DEAR DOCTOR,

\* \* \* You will not wonder that I value Mr. Wesley infinitely more for the lasting influence his character and views are yet likely to have upon minds capable of catching the beams of light he has emitted, than as the originator of a religious community, however respectable in itself, or beneficial to its members. It is my opinion (however, possibly, erroneous), that the Methodist community, in spite of every effort to prevent it, will undergo the same changes which all similar bodies have, hitherto, passed through, and which Mrs. Barbauld has admirably described in her "Essay on the Devotional Taste." Its beneficial influences on thousands of its members, especially while it was most completely in its perihelion, I have no disposition to depreciate. But, Puritans, Pietists, Jansenists, German Lutherans, and Swiss Calvinists, have all had their aphelion. And, therefore, were a sect or a society the only memorial of John Wesley's character and services, his name might, at length, seem to hold but a common place in the annals of the world.

But, to me, Mr. Wesley appears to have, on

far other accounts, an immense and imperishable value. On an attentive retrospect of the Christian Church, I am impressed with a persuasion, that whatever may have been the attainments of distinguished individuals, the science of experimental Christianity (if I may venture to use such a term) was meant to be progressively evolved, and that the depths of Holy Scripture were to be laid open in such proportion and succession as should best suit the growing capability of minds, and the eventual accomplishment of the divine scheme of beneficence. I think, too, it has been very generally, hitherto, the plan of Providence to employ a simultaneous plurality (or, rather, in most instances, a duality) of agencies. And, while I should conceive this providential expedient to be itself an evidence of existing immaturity, I should be inclined to infer comparative advancement of the great scheme, and somewhat of approach to its completion, when I should see, in any one agency (though it were, itself, only a member of a remarkable duality of agencies) a union of effective influences, hitherto, in a very great measure at least, mysteriously disunited.

What I mean by duality of agencies, appears to me to be exemplified in the two early distinctions of the Catholic Church,—the Greek and the Latin. And I think that their different providential functions became severally complete in the immortal labours of Chrysostom and Augustin. In the latter, the re-animating energies of the Gospel, their deep necessity and their infallible efficacy, are profoundly and wisely demonstrated :



while, in the former, the heights of Christian virtue are pointed to, not only as what ought to be aimed at, but as what may be actually reached and enjoyed, when the immortal mind of man has obtained new life and new wings from the omnipotent Spirit of God. On the other hand, Chrysostom seems to have had far less skill in the remedial operation of Christianity than Augustin; while the latter had so contemplated the moral disease of the human mind, as greatly to have lost sight of its restored capability.

The concurrent dualities which have so often occurred in later times, I must not advert to. But all of them may have somewhat resembled that first remarkable duality which I have sufficiently pointed out. In fact, its virtual continuance has been such, that Mr. Wesley represents it as generally observable in the beginning of his sermon on Isaiah, v. 4; 1st head, 5th section.

It is in the view, then, of this long-continued and generally prevalent disjunction of great Christian principles, that I make my chief estimate of Mr. Wesley's value. Though he was himself a member of a very signal duality, yet it has ever seemed to me that he has done more to unite the vital principles of the two schools—that of Augustin and that of Chrysostom—than ever was done before. His own persuasion of this fact is strongly expressed in the passage just referred to. And, however I may dissent from some of the terms which he there uses, I am convinced that his claim to providential distinction, in that respect, has a solid basis of truth.

I do not mean to say that Mr. Wesley has accomplished the object digestedly and systematically. Originators are seldom finishers; and it was Mr. Wesley's faculty to seize on truth by intuition, rather than to prove it by analysis. He could not stop to split a sunbeam on a prism, when he felt it was a sunbeam, not a meteor. I cannot deny, however, that the lower region of Mr. Wesley's mind was too much enveloped in a meteorous atmosphere: I mean, it has so appeared to me. Still, by a peculiar tact in his moral apprehension, he has seen and placed experimental Christianity in a light in which, I conceive, it never was so fully or so happily seen, or placed, since the Apostolic times.

I certainly could not point out, to another, any one part of Mr. Wesley's writings which would exemplify the service which I ascribe to him. A number of scattered rays would need to be combined, in order to exhibit his deliberate and matured conceptions of genuine and effective religion. But I am sure such lights exist in his writings; and that, when considered as they require and deserve to be, they will be found, unitedly, to cast a *purpureum lumen* upon our holy religion, which will recommend it to the natural taste and common sense of human beings, without abating its energies or compromising any one essential truth.

The particular views to which I refer were absent, in their essence, from Mr. Wesley's mind. But I think they opened upon him more fully, and were apprehended by him more consistently, during the latter twenty years of his life. He became less

engaged with the terrible aspect of religion, and dwelt much more on its attractions. I would say, however, that his notion of saving faith was always excellent at bottom, obscured as, in my mind, it often was by questionable positions and inconsiderate expressions. The substance of what is said on this subject, in the beginning of his "Further Appeal," (and much of what is stated in the first pages of the "Earnest Appeal"), I have long accounted invaluable.

I have, also, delighted in the pure moral spirit which is breathed, with such energy of soul, in the last paragraph of the sermon on the nature and use of the law. True Christian philosophy spoke through his mouth when he said,—“ Abhor sin far more than death or hell; abhor sin itself far more than the punishment of it. Beware of the bondage of pride, of desire, of anger, of every evil temper, or word, or work.” Than this, what could be more worthy of a disciple of Him who had declared,—“ Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God ?”

Yet, as I said, it appears to me, that, in Mr. Wesley's latter days, he urged those noble principles with more entire freedom and more engaging simplicity. Once, he had conjointly urged certain other topics. But, it would seem, that, on the 1st of December, 1767, a new light broke in upon his mind. On grounds which appeared clear, as the day, he puts the question,—“ If so, what becomes of the *articulus stantis, vel cadentis, Ecclesiæ* ?” And gives the strongest possible answer in the



next significant query,—“If so, is it not high time for us

*Projicere ampullas, et sesquipedalia verba,* and to return to the plain words, ‘He that feareth God and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him’?”

I cannot maintain that Mr. Wesley formed his subsequent course of teaching systematically upon that candid conclusion. But its essence ever after remained in his mind, and both liberalised and illumined his strain of preaching and writing.

Hence, I conceive, proceeded the well-known minutes of 1770. Hence, too, the doctrine of a gradually effective faith, and a proportionally gradual acceptance with God, so contrary to what he had once taught, as he ingenuously declares in his sermon on Heb. xi. 6. And hence, his full and free declaration in the sermon on Ephes. ii. 12, that, whatever might be a man’s views on certain doctrinal points (which he specifies), he himself had no doubt of that man’s everlasting salvation, if only, by the grace of God and the power of his Spirit, “his heart was filled with the humble, gentle, patient love of God and man.”

In fact, in these last few words, he appears to me to comprehend all which he latterly deemed essential to true, and even perfect, religion. The terms are excellently chosen, as at once doing justice to the subject, and bearing witness to his own exquisite moral feeling. I must say, it is chiefly this circumstance which makes me regard

Mr. Wesley's enfranchisement from dogmatic fetters, with peculiar complacency,—namely, that, instead of seeming to decline in religious affections (as, in similar cases, may too often have happened), his conceptions of the divine life within appear brighter and loftier than ever.

I inexpressibly value some transcendent instances of this kind in his later sermons; I feel in them such a pure effulgence of moral and spiritual happiness, unobscured by the slightest notional vapour. In invaluable Chrysostom alone have I found their parallel; but, certainly, nothing even in him which excels them. As examples of what I mean, I would refer to the last paragraph but one of “the important question;” and to the fifth section of the fifth head in the sermon on “The more excellent Way.” I really can place nothing that I know, from an uninspired pen, above the radiant conclusion of this last passage; heightened, as it is, by coming so unexpectedly at the close of as liberal a list of relaxations as either conscientious reason or true taste could demand: and,—what is most happy,—coming, too, as if to introduce nothing uncongenial, but, on the contrary, that which was the crown of all the rest. The first quotation with which the passage is enriched, is felicity itself; and, altogether, the idea which is given of prayer (the prayer not merely of the closet but of the heart), as the ever present recreation of the mind, as well as the vital sustenance of the immortal spirit,—

“God’s breath in man, returning to its birth,”

addresses itself so admirably, at once to the heart, the understanding, and the imagination (I would say to our very natural love of pleasure), that, in my estimation, these few sentences do more to edify than some thousand volumes. Herbert breathes the same spirit in the poem from which I have taken a line, but it was reserved for John Wesley to invest the full-grown habit of devotion with what I might almost venture to call a certain delightful airiness, which makes it not only spiritually, but naturally, engaging; yet, without the smallest abatement of that awful reverence with which we are ever to approach the Majesty of Heaven.

From what I have said, I think you may collect my special grounds of value for Mr. Wesley's memory. I am; I hope, sensible of the blessings he was the instrument of conferring on countless individuals; and I rejoice to think that his object ever was to point them to that grace which should make them good, as the only way in which they could be happy. I reflect, also, with inexpressible satisfaction, that this wonderful career of moral achievement (I use the word moral in no anti-spiritual sense) was accomplished without deriving a single weapon from the arsenal of Calvin. And I regard this fact as replete with invaluable and permanent instruction. But what gives me the deepest gratification is, that he not only improved upon others who had preceded him, but at length so signally improved upon himself. And I am impressed with the thought, that in doing this as he has done, he more resembles than any other



human being, since the Apostles, that angel whom St. John saw "flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth;" that is, as I take it, the Gospel freed from every temporary speculation which had been permitted to adhere to it, in condescension to human immaturity, and for its necessary adaptation to the lower stages of the great progressive scheme.

In a word, I consider John Wesley as promulgating in his latter days, above all uninspired men who had gone before him, Christianity in all its efficacy, and yet in all its amiability. On this ground, he appears to me the first competent unveiler of that concentration of the evangelic rays which has been so wonderfully (and I would almost venture to say exclusively) insphered in our established Liturgy. And I trust the time will yet come, and that it is not at any very great distance (though I confess as yet I see no sign of its approach), when the providential deposit which distinguishes the Church of England will be rightly appreciated; and Mr. Wesley's (peculiarly) designation, as the precursive announcer of its hitherto undeveloped excellences, will be fully understood and adequately recognised.

In what light these thoughts may appear to you, I cannot anticipate. But, asking the question with which I began my letter, I thought it incumbent on me to explain my present feelings respecting Mr. Wesley.

I wish you to convey my kind remembrances to Mrs. Clarke, if God has been pleased to bless

you with her continued life. And, hoping to have your answer as soon as is convenient to you,

I remain, my dear Doctor,

Your old, and not altered Friend,

ALEXANDER KNOX.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY JAMES MOYES, CASTLE STREET,  
LEICESTER SQUARE.

## ERRATA.

Page 17, line 6, and page 18, line 9, *for Harvey, read Hervey.*

.. 39, .. 15, *for δι, read δι'.*

.. 142, .. 24, .. I already quoted, *read I have already quoted.*

.. 235, .. 14, .. clear, *read dear.*

.. 253, .. 27, .. to what particular, *read in what particular.*

.. 268, .. 10, .. *ἰατὸν, read αἰτὸν.*

.. 279, 3 lines from bottom, *for καταβουσα, read κατορθούσα.*

.. 280, .. 1, .. *ἡδυνήσαν, read ἡδυνήθησαν.*

.. —, .. 9, .. *ζωνν, read ζώνν.*

.. 281, .. 18, .. Penticostal, *read Pentecostal.*

.. 298, .. 26, .. solidist, *read solidest.*

.. 311, .. 24, .. orbemà, *read orbem.*

.. 344, last line, .. Spencer, *read Spenser.*

.. 435, .. 22, after "subject of them" insert a comma; after "to others," omit a comma.



















